

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

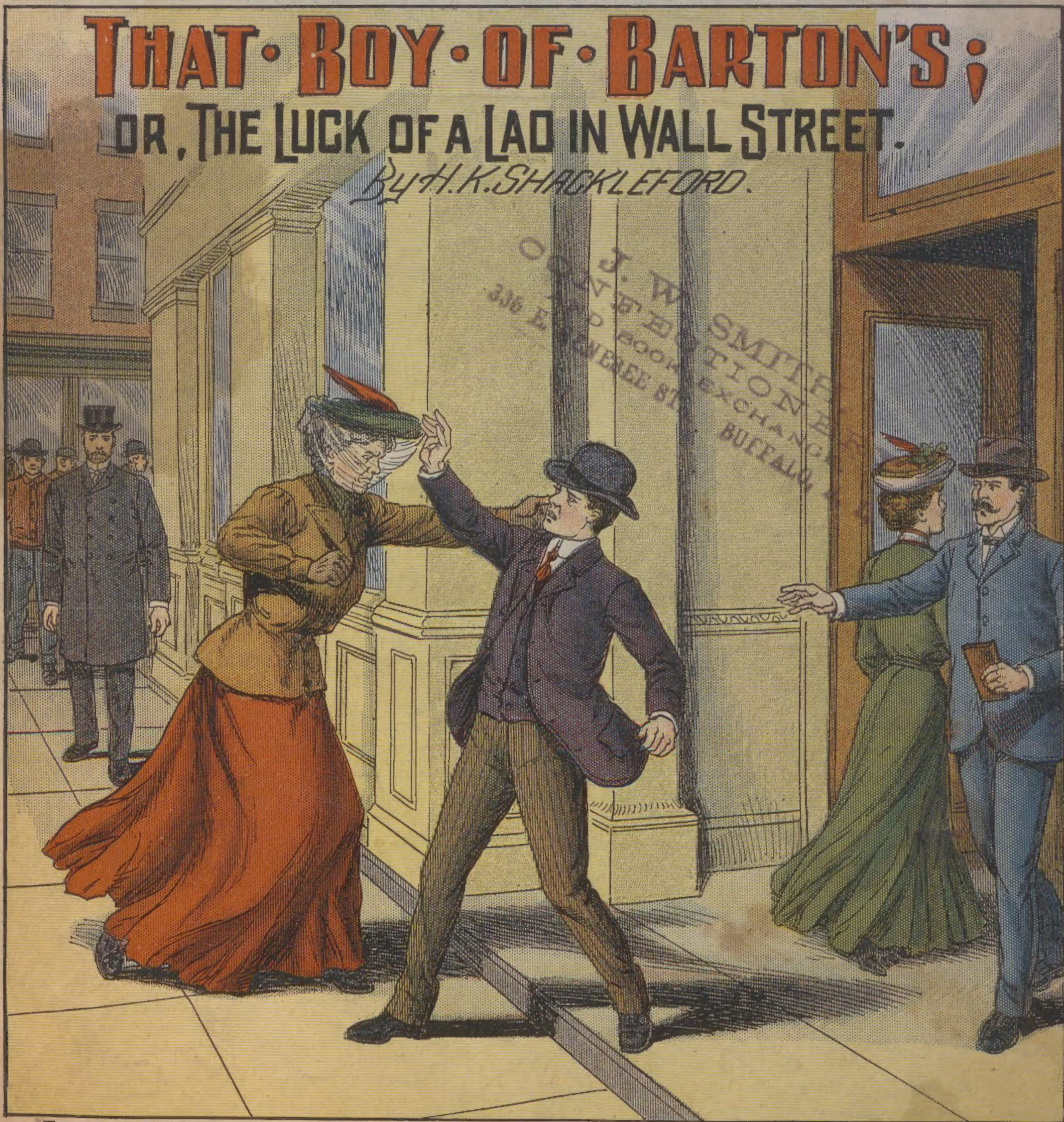
No. 459.

NEW YORK, MARCH 20, 1907.

Price 5 Cents.

THAT BOY OF BARTON'S; OR, THE LUCK OF A LAD IN WALL STREET.

By H. K. SHACKLEFORD.



To say that Alex was surprised would be a very mild way of describing his emotions as the woman gave him a resounding slap on the side of his head and face. He was dumfounded. He knew who she was.

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THE LUCK OF A LAD IN WALL STREET

By **H. K. SHACKLEFORD.**

CHAPTER I.

THAT BOY OF BARTON'S.

Broker Barton had been in Wall street many years. His hair and mustache were white as snow. There were men in the street who said he had been there forty years. No one knew how old he was. Some of the young brokers said he had passed his hundredth birthday, and one insisted that he was a passenger with Sir Hendrick Hudson when nobody lived on the island but Manhattan Indians. No matter how old he was at the opening of our story, he was tall, straight as an arrow, keen, shrewd and much feared by the brokers who had dealings with him. The oldest brokers in the street could make no charge against his integrity, but pretty near all of them had spots to rub after dealing with him.

He had three small rooms, one flight up in an old building on Wall below Broad street, where now stand great skyscrapers. In one room he had his desk and a big old rusty iron safe. In another a bookkeeper and two clerks. In the third he kept an errand boy who was also office boy and usher for visitors to the old broker.

That boy had been there nearly two years at the time of which we write, and was about sixteen years old. He had come from Virginia with his widowed mother and a sister two years older than himself. A fire had reduced them to direst poverty. The sister went to work in a store, and the boy left school to seek work where he could find it. By some strange inspiration in his search for work he wandered down into Wall street at a time of great excitement. A card hanging out bearing the legend "Boy Wanted" attracted his attention. He went in and Broker Barton glanced over him quickly, and asked:

"How old are you?"

"A little over fourteen, sir."

"Too young—too young," and he shook his head.

"But I'm getting older every day, sir," the boy ventured to remark.

A grim smile flashed over the old broker's face, and his gray eyes twinkled.

"That's so, and so am I," he remarked. "What is your name?"

"Alex Alston, sir."

"Alston, eh? Why, that's a Virginia name!"

"I was born in Virginia, sir."

"Eh?" and the old broker gave a start, glanced quickly at him again as if to say something.

Then his face changed to an ashen pallor and he remained silent as the Sphinx. A moment or two later he arose, went into the bookkeeper's room, took a big drink of water and went back.

"I'll try you a week," he said to the boy. "Mr. Babcock, the bookkeeper, will tell you what you will have to do. The main thing is to do just what you are told to do, and do it as quickly as possible."

That was the way Alex Alston got into Wall street two years before the opening of our story. He had made himself indispensable to the old broker, who would as soon think of discharging his old bookkeeper as doing without the services of his office boy. The boy understood him and his moods better than anyone in his employ, and governed himself by that knowledge.

Yet nearly every broker who had dealings with the old man had complained of the boy—of his pranks. The old man smiled grimly at every complaint and said:

"I'll have him shot, sir."

He was known to habitués of the street as "That Boy of Barton's," and by that title he was known up and down Wall, Broad and Nassau streets. Some hated and many loved him. The other office boys kept awake of nights thinking over plans to get even with him.

One day a very stout, pompous, middle-aged woman alighted from a carriage in front of Barton's and climbed the stairs to his office. She remained an hour with the old broker, and when she went away Alex heard the little bell on his desk call for him. He quickly responded.

"Never let that woman see me here again under any circumstances," said the old broker to him.

He bowed and went out without uttering a word.

That was why the old man liked him so well—he never talked unless there was a necessity for it.

A few days later the woman came in again.

"Mr. Barton is out, ma'am," he said to her in her blindest tone.

"When will he be in?" she asked.

"Don't know, ma'am. He has business at the Stock Exchange, and no one knows what is going to happen next there."

She looked up at the clock in a calculating sort of way, and remarked:

"As I am here now, I'll wait till he comes in. I must see him," and she sat down in a convenient chair.

Barton heard her in his little office and knew her voice. He arose softly and sprung the latch on the door lest she should come in on him. There was another door from his room that opened into the bookkeeper's. Alex went in by that route and told him in a whisper that she was in the front room waiting for him.

"Get her out in some way," he ordered.

He went to a closet in the bookkeeper's room and took therefrom a small, wide-mouthed bottle, not unlike those used by druggists for the sale of vaseline. He drew the cork and set the bottle down in a corner of the front room, dropping a newspaper carelessly over it.

In a very few minutes a subtle odor began to fill the three rooms. In comparison with it, a Chinese stink pot was first-class cologne. The two windows in the bookkeeper's room were hastily thrown open, and the clerks were heard gasping for breath. Barton leaned far out of his window and gasped:

"In Heaven's name, what is it?"

Alex grasped his nose and groaned:

"Oh, Lord!"

The woman sprang up and made a break for the outer door, staggering into the corridor gagging and gasping. Some of the odor followed her through the door and gently ascended the different flights of stairs to the top floor.

Alex saw her sail down the stairs to the street. Then he hurried back and clapped the cork into that bottle—the little magazine of Almighty Scent!

Then he quietly walked into the little private office and said:

"She has gone, sir."

"Eh! Ough! Did she bring that odor with her?" Barton asked.

"No, sir. That's what I ran her out with."

Barton drew himself in from the window, glared at the boy and gasped:

"Eh! What! You!"

"Yes, sir—here it is," and he held up the little bottle to view.

Quick as a flash he leaned far out of the window for more fresh air.

Then a great guffaw burst from him—he the oldest and most staid of all the brokers of the street. Men and boys on the street below looked up in amazement and listened to a wild blast of hilarity such as they had never heard before.

Babcock, the old bookkeeper, ran in and in great alarm asked:

"What's the matter with him?"

"He thinks it's funny the way I got that woman to leave."

"How did you do it?"

"Didn't you smell it?"

"Smell it! Did you do that?"

"I did, and she skipped out like a fairy."

Then the old bookkeeper guffawed. He sank down on a chair and laughed and wiped his eyes, held his sides and finally fell off on to the floor. The two dude clerks still leaned far out the window, lest they should be overcome by the odor and perish ignominiously. No amount of hilarity could induce them to draw their heads in as long as a faint scent of that odor remained.

"Rap—rap—rap!" on the front door.

Alex hastened to open it.

John Truman, an old broker with an office on the floor above, was there.

"What's the trouble in here?" he asked.

"There's something the matter with Mr. Babcock, sir," Alex replied.

"Come in, Truman!" called Barton from his inner office. Truman went and remarked:

"There's an awful bad smell about the building. Where does it come from, I wonder?"

A short, sharp snap of a laugh came from the old broker, and the next moment he was as solemn-looking as an owl.

"Say, what's the matter with you and your man, Barton?" Truman demanded.

Alex had gone in to look at the old bookkeeper. Barton shut the door and told him what had happened. Truman roared, and Barton joined him.

Then the two clerks concluded it was safe to take their heads in. The open windows had relieved the oppressed atmosphere, and they could breathe freely again. They asked Alex what ailed the old man, but all the reply they got was an ominous shake of the head and a shrug of the shoulders.

Babcock finally recovered, arose from the floor, picked up his spectacles, and returned to his desk as though he had just come out of a hard fit.

The clerks stared at him in silence and went back to their desks, and when they occasionally heard gasping chuckles coming from the old bookkeeper they wondered if the bad smell had affected his mentality.

Truman went out just as the janitor of the building came in. The latter was trying to trace the odor. He asked Alex where it came from?

"I wish I knew," was the reply, "I'd get as far away from it as the size of the earth would let me."

Upstairs in Truman's office great peals of laughter were heard. Broker after broker came in, and the story was repeated that added to the fame of that boy of Barton's.

CHAPTER II.

ALEX'S ESCAPE AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

As a result of his ruse to get rid of an unwelcome customer, Alex Alston was talked of in every office in Wall and Broad streets. Very few mentioned his name, though. He was known as "that boy of Barton's," and was thus spoken of by everybody who told the story.

Two days later Barton sent him to Longman & Short's office with a note for the firm. He was told to be quick about it. But he had to wait for an answer. A couple of brokers were in a corner of the outer room waiting for the junior member of the firm. Alex was standing near them when Short joined them.

"See here," said Short, "I can't go over just now. Just go ahead and buy all you can before the boom begins. I'll try to get over there inside of a half hour."

The two brokers turned away and went out.

"It's another deal and a boom," said Alex to himself as he stood there waiting for the note he was to take back to his employer. He waited longer than he thought would pass with the old man, and then said to the office boy:

"See here, Jimmie, skip inside there and tell Mr. Longman

that Mr. Barton is waiting for a reply to his note. A man as old as he is can't afford to wait long, you know."

Jimmie chuckled and shook his head.

"Won't go, eh?"

"Nope."

"Well, I will," and he opened the door of the broker's private office and went in.

Longman was at his desk writing.

"Any answer for Mr. Barton, sir?" Alex asked.

Longman looked up quickly on hearing a strange voice.

"Yes, when I am ready to give it," was the surly reply.

"He told me to be quick about it, sir."

"Get out!"

Alex stood there gazing at him—just inside the door.

Quick as a flash the irate broker, who had been squeezed in a deal by old Barton, snatched up a heavy glass paper weight and hurled it at him. Alex dodged it, and it landed on the head of Jimmie in the outer room.

Down went Jimmie, a thousand stars flashing before his eyes.

"Shall I run for a doctor, sir?" Alex asked, looking around at Jimmie lying on the floor, and then again at the enraged broker, who had risen hastily to his feet on seeing the result of his hasty action.

"No! Run for your life!" hissed Longman, rushing at him.

Alex slipped out into the corridor like a vanishing vapor, and the door closed behind him.

Longman was alarmed at seeing his office boy lying so still on the floor. He opened an inner door and called to one of the clerks, who promptly ran to him.

"Take Jimmie into the back room, quick!" was the order.

The clerk stooped and lifted up the unconscious boy. He saw the cut on his forehead made by the paper weight and asked:

"Who did it, sir?"

"That boy of Barton's."

The clerk bore him into the rear room just in time to avoid being seen by two well-known brokers, who entered from the outer corridor.

Alex hurried along the corridor to the head of the flight of stairs that led down to the street. Just as he was about to descend, he saw an envelope lying on the floor. It was dirty, having been stepped on, apparently, by some people coming and going that day. He stooped, picked it up, and found it unaddressed, but filled with paper of some kind. He went on down the stairs, holding it in his hand. He had no time to look at its contents, so he thrust it into his pocket, and hurried on to the office.

Old Barton was in a bad humor when Alex returned.

"He sent no reply, sir," Alex reported.

"What kept you so long there?"

Alex told him what had happened.

"Knocked his boy on the head, eh? Nice way to get even with me," and the old man chuckled as he turned to his desk again.

Alex went into the clerks' room for a drink of water, after which he returned to the reception-room to await any call that might be made for him. Then it was he thought of the envelope he had picked up on the stairs of Longman & Short's office. He pulled it out and opened the envelope by tearing off one end of it. To his amazement he saw the ends of money in bills.

"Lord! what luck is this?" he half gasped, as he peeped inside the envelope. "A big wad of greens or I'm dreaming!" and he peeped again. Then he pinched himself on the thigh to make sure he was wide awake.

"Won't do to open and count here," he said to himself, in whispered tones, as he placed it in his pocket again. "May be

a million dollars in it, and it would take me a long time to count it. Wonder who dropped it? Wonder how much will be offered for its return?"

Old Barton went out just then, and Alex slipped into the little private office and counted the money. He counted it quickly—\$1,000.

He gave a low whistle and put the wad in his pocket.

There was nothing to show to whom it belonged.

He tore up the envelope and dropped the fragments into the waste-basket.

"It will be in the papers," he said to himself, "and then I'll know who lost it. Hope a big reward will be offered for it."

Half an hour later old Barton came back, wrote a note, and sent Alex over to the Stock Exchange with it. He went in through the door on the New street side, where all messengers were met by the doorkeeper.

"For Mr. Greenbaum," he said to the doorkeeper, holding up his note, and then stood by looking for his man.

"There he is—over there," said the doorkeeper, pointing to a little group of brokers in a corner, apart from the howling mob in the center of the room.

Alex saw the rotund form of the son of Israel over there, and hurried to deliver the note. Greenbaum looked it over, nodded to Alex and said:

"Vait a vile dill I see vot he says."

Alex retired to the place assigned to waiting messengers, under the visitors' gallery, and looked on. There was a good deal of excitement going on at the time. Suddenly he saw one of the two brokers whom he met in the waiting-room at Longman & Short's office less than an hour before, when he heard Broker Short tell him to "buy all he could before the boom began."

"By George! He's buying all the B. & D. shares he can get!" said Alex, after listening and looking on for a few minutes, "and it's going at 68. Wonder if it's going to boom? It will if he keeps on buying."

Greenbaum came over to him and gave him a note for Barton.

He hurried out with it and in a couple of minutes more the old man had it.

"Can I have ten minutes off, sir?" Alex asked him.

Barton nodded affirmatively and he was off like a flash, going down the stairs about four steps at a time. Round on Broad street he ran and flew up a flight of stairs into the office of a bank, the cashier of whom he knew.

"Who does the margin act in this show?" he asked the cashier.

The cashier smiled and said:

"Mr. Wilson, at the fourth window, but he won't take any of your sweet-smelling stuff, I can tell you."

"Well, if he doesn't take what I offer him I'll make him smell something," and he made his way to the fourth window, where he asked a mild-mannered, spectacled man if he was Mr. Wilson.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well, here's \$1,000—margin. Buy me \$10,000 worth of B. & D. just as quick as you can," and he laid the wad of money down in front of him.

Wilson counted it over, laid it aside, took up a pencil and asked:

"What name?"

"A. Alston."

He handed out a memoranda, and Alex hurried away with it.

"If it goes up the profits will be mine. The owner of the principal can have it by proving property. If it goes down the loss can come out of my reward for the return of what's left."

He returned in nine minutes from the time he left the office. The old broker was at his desk adding up a long column of figures, so Alex sat down to wait and think.

He was doing some very hard thinking when the front door opened and the big woman, whom he had forced to retreat so ignominiously a few days before, entered. He gave a start and rose to his feet. He saw blood in her eye and made a dash for the outer door, hoping she would chase him. She did, and close at his heels. But just as she darted out into the corridor she made a grab at him. She caught a dapper little man of forty who was about Alex's size.

"You vile little viper!" she hissed, in densely concentrated rage. "Play me dirty mean tricks, will you! Set the whole street to laughing at a respectable lady, will you! Take that, and that and that!" and she gave him slaps that sounded the entire length of the corridor.

"Madam! I—I—madam! You have made a—mistake! I—I—help! Help!"

The dapper little man's glasses flew off his nose. So did his hat. Then his heels flew about promiscuously as she jerked him around and slammed him against the wall. It was just a trifle dark at that end of the corridor, hence she did not discover her mistake till a score of men ran up and rescued him from her vengeance.

She was boiling mad.

"The vile little imp!" she cried, as she tried to get at him again. "Play me a vile trick, will he? Stink me out of Wall street, will he? Well, let me have my hands on him once more and he'll smell louder than that if they don't bury him!"

Just at that moment she got a good view of the face and bald head of the little man who had been torn from her clutches.

"Oh, my! Oh, my!" she screamed. "What have I done? He isn't the one!" and she made a break to get away. She collided with three or four men, and sent them sprawling on the floor of the corridor. She dashed for the stairs, and went down to the street like an avalanche. In front of the office stood a carriage which had brought her there. Almost leaping into it, she called to the driver:

"Quick, quick! Drive me home and don't stop for anybody!"

The driver whipped up his horses, and the carriage went up the street toward Broadway at a speed that threatened man and beast with broken limbs, if nothing worse.

CHAPTER III.

"THE MONEY IS ALL RIGHT!"

While the woman was shaking up the dapper little man in the corridor, thinking she had Alex in her grasp, the latter stood farther away looking on at the demolition of his substitute. When the cry for help rang out every office in the building poured forth its quota of excited brokers and clerks.

When she discovered her mistake, and fled precipitately along the corridor and down to the street, sympathizing friends gathered around Mr. Clayton, for that was his name, and asked him what it was all about.

"The Lord alone knows," he replied. "I never saw her before and don't know who she is."

"Oh, I know who she is," said a broker. "Half the brokers in the street know and fear Mrs. Grady."

"Grady!" gasped Clayton.

"Yes; the woman speculator who worries the life out of any broker who takes a commission from her."

"She is the one Barton's boy played the trick on the other day," said another.

"I understand it all now," said Clayton, as he sadly pulled himself together. "I am a martyr for that boy's sins. She

chased him out of Barton's and caught me by mistake at the door there. He stood by and saw her grinding me up."

The crowd yelled and roared with laughter. It was too much for them. Barton had locked his door to keep the crowd out. The corridor was jammed with brokers and clerks.

"Where is that boy?"

"Bring him out!" cried another. "He has more luck than any mascot alive!"

"I want a lock of his hair for luck!" sung out another.

Alex was in the crowd, but he slipped out unperceived and went over to the Stock Exchange. In a few minutes he heard B. & D. going at 69.

"Hello! Gone up one point!" he ejaculated. "I wonder how much that means to me? I'll see," and he took out a pencil and began some rapid figuring.

"One hundred and forty-seven shares," he said, when he got through figuring. "That's one hundred and forty-seven for me. Well, I ain't kicking one bit as long as it goes that way. Even if the loser of that envelope doesn't pay a cent of reward for the return of the money, I'll have something out of it, anyway!"

He remained some twenty minutes longer, and saw the stock climb up half a point higher. Then he went out to return to Barton's office.

"Guess the coast is clear by this time," he said, chuckling. "They must think I was scared clear over into Jersey. Lord, how she yanked him around! She's no sweetheart of mine."

He climbed up the stairs and made his way back to Barton's office. Men were coming and going along the corridor, none of whom seemed to know him. He entered the office and found Truman with the old broker.

"Here he is!" exclaimed Truman.

"Where have you been, Alex?" the old broker demanded, in a stern tone of voice.

"Been hiding out, sir."

The brokers roared.

"Did you know she got hold of Clayton and nearly killed him?" Truman finally asked him.

"Yes. I heard his bones rattle."

"Why didn't you help him—let her know her mistake?"

"Because I wasn't built that way."

Again they roared.

Alex never smiled, but went on:

"I ran out to lead her out. She followed and grabbed him just outside the door and began rattling him. I ain't making any holy show of myself these days, so I skipped. Sorry for him and glad for myself. I wasn't armed. That's why I scooted."

"Do you ever go armed?" Truman asked.

"Well, sometimes I carry a skunk's bowie-knife."

Truman and Barton went into convulsions. They understood that he meant his terrible little wide-mouthed bottle, and the name seemed so apt it upset them completely. They laughed till they cried, and Alex went out to his place in the front room, sat down and quietly began speculating on the probable extent of the boom of B. & D. shares.

Other brokers came in and old Barton had to entertain them. They laughed over the incident, and, after quite a discussion, several of them agreed to use their influence toward persuading Clayton to prosecute her for assault.

"That may keep her out of the street or run her out of the State," one remarked.

"Let every man carry a bottle of Alston's cologne," suggested another.

"What the deuce is it, anyway?" a third asked.

They turned to Alex for an answer.

"Hanged if I know," he replied.

"Where did you get it?"

"From a Chinaman."

There was another roar of laughter.

He offered to get it and give them a smell, but they one and all declined with thanks.

When business ended for the day Alex overheard a broker say that B. & D. had gone to 70, and would go higher the next day. He went home in high spirits, and helped his mother in her household work in their little flat over on the east side.

When his sister Irene came home at 7 o'clock from the store she was very much excited, tired as she was. She was two years older than Alex, tall and beautiful.

"See here, mother," she said, handing her mother an evening paper, her finger pointing to an article in it, "just read that, please."

It was the story of Mrs. Grady's mistake down in Wall street, wherein dapper little Notary Clayton was so roughly handled. It told about Alex's terrible little wide-mouthed bottle and its awful contents. Mrs. Alston's risibles got the better of her, though she was shocked at the part Alex had played in it. She laughed till she cried, and Alex came in from the kitchen to find out what it was about. He owned up and laughed with them. But Irene was somewhat angry over it, and told him he ought to be ashamed of himself for letting an innocent man get such a beating.

"Why didn't you run up to her and tell her of her mistake?" she exclaimed.

"Because I wasn't feeling well," he replied. "I'll do it next time."

The next day that boy of Barton's was in all the papers. Mrs. Grady hurriedly left the city to stay until the incident should be forgotten.

But down in Wall street the messenger boys had a lively time with Alex whenever they got a chance at him. Every one asked for a "smell." Some held their noses as they passed him, and others asked for just a drop on their handkerchiefs.

He stood it good-naturedly, and kept his eye on the record made by B. & D. in the Exchange. It was up to 74 by noon, and the brokers began to get excited. Barton sent him three times to the Exchange with notes to different brokers, and at each visit he found it one or two points higher. When business for the day closed it was standing at 77.

"Lord, what luck!" he exclaimed. "I'll get a start now and will soon have an office of my own. But not a living soul shall know of this till I get enough money to hold my hand against these old sharks."

The next day the stock opened at 80, and the brokers went wild over it. They screamed and yelled like lunatics, and the excitement helped to send it up higher. By noon it was at 86.

"My fortune is made!" said Alex to himself, as he went back over to the office. Barton and all the clerks had gone out to lunch. He was there alone for the time. A young girl came in.

"Is Mr. Barton in?" she asked.

"No. I think he is over at the Exchange," Alex replied.

"Has he a typewriter?" she asked.

"No."

"I am trying to find a place," and she dropped into a chair with a sigh.

He brought her a drink of water, for which she thanked him.

"I've had awful hard luck," she said. "I lost my last place through a two weeks' illness. My mother and I had \$1,000 saved up, and on Monday last she drew it out of the bank, put it in an envelope and gave it to me to hand to Mr. Dubois, the broker, to use for her. When I got there it was gone. I had lost it. We have never heard from it since. Oh, it was awful," and her large brown eyes filled with tears as she spoke.

"Say," and Alex wheeled around with an almost fierce energy, "was it in a plain envelope—nothing written on it?"

"Yes—and nothing but the money in it," she replied.

"Well, I found it. The money is all right!" he blurted out.

She gave a scream and swooned, just as Broker Barton entered the door.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WIDOW AND HER DAUGHTER.

Alex caught the girl to save her from a fall to the floor, and old Barton stood aghast at the scene of a beautiful young girl in a swoon in his office.

"What's the matter with her, Alex?" the old man asked.

"She's fainted, sir."

"Well, what made her faint?"

"I'll tell you when she comes to, sir," and Alex looked just a trifle tired at the old broker's failure to help him out of his predicament.

But just at that moment Babcock, the old bookkeeper, who had a wife and daughters, came in and saw what the trouble was. He quickly ran into the clerks' room and procured a glass of water, with which he returned. Pouring some of the water into his hand he sprinkled it in her face. She gave a start, gasped and began to struggle to free herself from Alex's hold. He gently placed her in the chair again and said:

"You are all right now."

She drew a long breath and looked at Alex, the old bookkeeper, and then at the old broker.

"What's the trouble, miss?" Barton asked her, after a few minutes had elapsed.

"She came in to see if you could give her work as a typewriter," said Alex. "She is very tired and suddenly fainted."

"Well, I am sorry, but I haven't work enough to keep one busy," the old broker said to her. "If I should need one I'll let you know," and he passed into his office.

Babcock went back with the glass to the clerks' room.

Alex leaned over, whispering to the girl:

"Wait till I can get out and I'll try to get you the money. I put it in the bank."

She was glad to sit there a while longer, so she smiled and nodded her head.

He went into the private office and said to the old broker:

"If you can spare me half an hour I think I can get her a place, sir."

"Half an hour, eh? Well, go ahead and get back as soon as you can."

"Thank you, sir."

Alex returned to her and said:

"Come on."

She arose and went out with him.

He went round to the bank on Broad street, and had her take a seat while he interviewed the margin clerk.

"I want to sell out my holding of B. & D. shares," he said.

"What name?" the clerk asked.

"A. Alston."

The clerk turned to the books and saw the record of the matter.

"All right! The stock will be sold in ten minutes."

"I want to give a check for one thousand dollars against the deal. Can I do so?"

"Yes, but it can't be settled till we know the selling price."

"You will know by to-morrow?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then give me a blank check."

The clerk gave him a blank, and he filled it out properly, after which he asked what her name was.

"Tessie Craig," she replied.

He put her name on the check, making it payable to her order.

"Here's the check for one thousand dollars," he said to her. "It is safer to carry that than the money. Take it home to your mother, or give it to your broker and let him collect the money for you."

She looked at his name at the bottom of the check and said:

"Oh, I'll never forget that name as long as I live! I never expected to see that money again."

"Had there been any address in the envelope I would have hunted you up," he replied.

"You—will—er—please don't feel hurt, but won't you let me give you some of it for——"

"Not a penny—not a penny," he said. "Just let us be friends—let me come up and see you some time."

"Oh, my, yes! Here's my home address," and she wrote on a card her street and number. "I am going right straight home now to make mother's heart glad."

"That's right. I must hurry back to the office. You know how we boys have to hustle up to three o'clock."

"Yes—yes. I'll come down again to-morrow. I've got to find a place somewhere, for I can't remain idle."

"I'll inquire for you in every office I am sent to," he remarked.

"Thank you. I am sure I appreciate your kindness."

By that time they were down on the street again. When they reached the Stock Exchange he asked her if she had ever been in there when the brokers were crazy?

"Yes," she laughed, "and I thought it strange to see so many crazy people in one lot."

"Well, I've got to go in there now. My time is not my own, you know."

"Don't let me detain you, then. I am going straight home to tell mother the good news."

"Have you got carfare?" Alex asked.

"Oh, yes, thank you."

He bowed, and she hurried off up toward Broadway. Alex gazed after her, and muttered:

"The prettiest girl I ever met. She little dreams of how she staked me with a thousand dollars. I'll see if I can find out what B. & D. is going for."

He found out in just one minute that it was going at 92.

"Lord, but I hope I got that!" he exclaimed, as he heard the bids.

Hurrying out, he hastened back to the office. Barton had an errand for him—to take a note to the Exchange. He was back there again inside of five minutes. B. & D. had jumped up to 95.

"Whew!" he ejaculated. "I might have made more, but she was the cause of it. I didn't want her to be suspicious and I couldn't have given the check till the shares were sold. Ah! There's Mr. Blaisdell. He buys and sells for the bank. I'll ask him what he sold 147 shares for?" and he did.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because they were mine," he replied.

"They sold at 92."

"Thank you," and he hurried out and returned to the office, muttering to himself as he went:

"That's \$24 on each share. Lord, but it's a scoop! I'll figure it up when I get upstairs."

He had nothing more to do for half an hour, so he sat down and figured up the amount he had made on the deal.

"Over \$3,500," he said softly to himself. "Lord, but I ought to divide it with her! But I'm afraid to let her know I used the money. Her mother might jump in and claim the whole pile. I'll be a clam for once in my life. If I don't say anything she'll be glad enough to get her money back. If some-

body else had found it she wouldn't have ever gotten a smell of it again."

The next morning Mrs. Craig and her daughter were the first ones at the cashier's window in the bank. The widow presented the check and asked:

"Is that good for the money?"

The cashier looked at it for a moment or two and replied:

"Wait a moment, please," and went to the margin clerk for information.

"Yes," said the clerk. "He has \$4,538 to his credit, with only the commission standing against it."

The cashier returned and said to the widow:

"The check is all right, madam. Do you want the money?"

"I want to deposit it with my banker."

"Then I'll certify it for you, and you can take the check there," and he did so.

"Now come on, dear," said Mrs. Craig to her daughter. "I want to see that honest boy and tell him what I think of him."

They hurried out of the bank down to the street, and made their way down Wall street to the office of old Broker Barton. Tessie led the way into the dingy office. Alex was out on an errand, but she went to the door of the old broker's private office and rapped on it.

"Come in!" the old man said.

She pushed open the door and walked in. Her mother was close behind her. The old broker, always polite, rose to his feet with a puzzled expression on his wrinkled face.

"What can I do for you, ladies?" he asked.

"I—I was in here yesterday, sir," said Tessie, looking shyly up at him.

He gave her a quick, sharp glance and recognized her.

"Ah! Yes—so you were. I remember you. Take seats, ladies," and he placed chairs for them.

"Thank you, sir," said the widow. "We called to see your messenger and thank him for returning to my daughter \$1,000 which she had lost in an envelope some days ago."

"Eh? What? Found a thousand dollars and returned it?" exclaimed the astonished old broker. "You must be dreaming, madam. There are no honest boys nowadays—or men either, as for that matter."

"But he did find it, sir, and as there was nothing in the envelope to show to whom it belonged, he placed it in the bank in his own name. My daughter came here yesterday looking for work. She happened to tell him of her loss, and he said he had found her money. He gave her a check for it. The banker said it was good. Here's the check, sir, certified by the bank," and she showed him the check. He took it and looked at it, with an expression of amazement in his face that could not be concealed.

"Well, madam," he said, as he handed the check back to her, "you are a lucky woman. I have had that boy here nearly two years, and thought I knew him. I am knocked out worse than ever before in my life, and I've been living a long time, I can tell you. That boy ought to be killed right now, and have a monument put up to his memory right out there in Wall street before he grows up to be wicked like the rest of us."

Tessie and her mother laughed.

Alex came in at that moment, and the girlish voice sang out:

"Here he is, mother!"

"Hello!" Alex greeted, on seeing the girl.

Tessie smiled and extended her hand to him. He shook it warmly, and then the widow seized his hand in both hers, pouring out her thanks in a stream of feminine eloquence. She begged him to let her give him \$100.

"Not a cent," he said, shaking his head. "If you were a

man I'd just hold out my hat and let you fill it. But you are a woman and she said it was all you had in the world. I'm no hog—not even a pig."

They all laughed, and the widow said:

"You will believe me, won't you, when I tell you how grateful I am for——"

"Oh, yes, of course. I'll tell you what you can do for me, though, if you will."

"Tell me what it is."

"Just keep the other fellows away from your daughter for three or four years till I'm old enough to look after her and keep her from losing any more money."

Tessie blushed, her mother laughed, and old Barton guffawed. A few minutes later the visitors left the office.

CHAPTER V.

"AN HONEST LAD, SIS!"

As soon as the mother and daughter were gone the old broker looked steadily at Alex for about two minutes, saying nothing. The latter returned his gaze unflinchingly, waiting to be spoken to before saying anything himself.

"How came you to do?" the old man finally asked him.

"I am not a thief," he replied.

"You didn't steal it."

"No, but it wasn't mine, and so I gave it up to her."

"Why didn't you take the \$100 she offered you?"

"Because she is a widow, and that was all the money she had."

The old man turned to his desk and remained still and silent for many minutes. Alex returned to his seat and began reading a paper. Barton called the old bookkeeper in and told him the story of the finding of the \$1,000. The old man was astonished, but said:

"The boy always impressed me as an honest lad, sir."

"He must be—he must be," mused the old broker, "or else a blamed fool of some sort. Wall street will ruin him, though. It's a bad place for him, Babcock."

"Yes, yes, very likely."

"I don't think that, sir. He has sense enough to avoid a snare or leap a pit."

Babcock returned to his desk and the office work went on in its usual routine. Before business for the day closed he had told the story to the two clerks. They both voted him "an idiot."

"Maybe he is, but I don't think so," remarked Babcock.

"He had the money in bank several days and never touched a dollar of it?" one asked.

"Yes."

"And never said a word to anybody about it?"

"No, it seems not."

"That shows he intended to keep it. That girl's crying caused him to forget himself. I bet he is kicking himself right now."

"But she tried to make him accept \$100 of it, and he would not take a cent," remarked the old bookkeeper.

"Then he is an idiot—out and out."

"But we know that he isn't," and the old man laughed.

"He is just simply honest, that's all."

"Bah!"

They didn't believe in honesty. They had been down in Wall street a long time, and had seen many phases of human nature in the light of financial maneuvers. They had grown into the belief that the sin of dishonesty was in the punishment rather than in the commission of it.

By and by Alex went into the clerks' room for a drink of water. They looked hard at him as he passed them, and one of them left his desk to feel his head as a phrenologist would.

"What's the matter?" Alex asked him.

"Simply trying to find out what ails you," was the reply.

"There's nothing the matter with me," and Alex laughed.

"What have you been drinking?"

Old Babcock and the other clerk laughed.

"I've drank nothing but water to-day," replied the officious clerk.

"Just born so then, eh?"

Babcock chuckled.

"Yes, born with sense enough to keep any money I pick up in the street," was the reply.

"Or anywhere else, I guess," returned Alex. "Some people are built that way."

The clerk turned red in the face, and his eyes flashed.

"For two cents I'd kick you through the ceiling!" he hissed.

Alex looked up at the ceiling, as if measuring the height, and then drew two cents from his pocket, laid them on the desk near him and remarked:

"I'll give two cents to scare those fellows upstairs. Kick me through the ceiling, please."

The clerk was in a towering rage, but he dared not kick. He feared the consequences to himself.

Babcock chuckled, and the other clerk whispered:

"Let him have it, Maurice!"

But Maurice didn't let him have it. Mr. Barton entered the room, and the clerk returned to his desk. Alex took up his two cents, smiled and went out.

When he got a chance he ran over to the bank to see how much money he had to his credit. He saw Blaisdell, the broker, who represented the bank on the floor of the Stock Exchange. The cashier told him who Alex was.

"Yes, I saw him yesterday," the broker replied. "You account it with the margin clerk. He'll give you the figures if you apply to him."

"Can't I leave my money here on deposit?" Alex asked of the cashier.

"Yes, I suppose so—if the amount is not too small," was the reply.

"I hope to make it larger some day. I can start in with something over \$3,000, I guess."

"Well, see the margin clerk."

He saw the margin clerk and had a settlement with him. He had some \$3,300 after the transaction was closed, and some taken out for his own use. That he left on deposit and went away feeling like a giant.

"Some day I'll divide that with Tessie Craig," he said to himself, as he went back to his post. "It won't do to tell her about it now, for I——"

"There goes that boy of Barton's," said a broker, as he passed him. "He found a thousand dollars and——"

He passed out of hearing and so lost the sentence.

"Hanged if they haven't got hold of it," said Alex, as he went on.

"Hello, Alex!" greeted Broker Truman's messenger, running up against him.

"Hello, Jimmie!" he returned.

"They are talking bad about you upstairs," said Jimmie.

"They say you found a thousand dollars and gave 'em up. Is it right?"

"Guess it is."

"What did you git?"

"It belonged to a widow with a pretty daughter. The girl gave me a smile."

"Gosh almighty!" gasped Jimmie, "you'll die in the poor-house!"

"That may be, but I'll go to Heaven all the same."

Jimmie took to his heels. Alex laughed and went on his way.

"I'll have some fun out of it, anyway," he said, as he went

up the stairs. "Guess Mr. Barton must have told Mr. Truman about it."

A startled exclamation caused him to look up to the top of the flight. He saw an elderly man, very stout, stumbling down the stairs, vainly trying to save himself. Quick as a flash he turned round and planted his feet against the balusters as a brace, holding on with both hands for support. The heavy load struck him, but he held fast. A half dozen men instantly ran to his assistance, and helped the man to his feet. Then he was led into Upham's office, just at the top of the flight, where he sat down and said:

"Lord, but it was a narrow escape! I am bruised, but no bones are broken. Somebody braced himself and stopped me."

"It was that boy of Barton's," someone said. "He was coming up, and when he saw you going down, he wheeled and made a snag of himself for you to lodge against."

"Yes, yes; I saw him do that. He saved me a limb or two, if not my life. When a heavy man like me falls downstairs it's no fun. I'll see that boy about it. He's a brave, quick lad. Will somebody call a carriage for me?"

One of the clerks in Upham's office was sent down for a carriage. When it came Mr. Camak was assisted down to it by two well-known brokers. He was a very rich old broker who was a heavy stockholder in several banks and railroad companies.

In the meantime Alex had hurried into Barton's office to deliver a note he had brought back. He said nothing of the accident on the stairs, and it was not till the next day that it was known in the office.

"I'll bet he hasn't sense enough to take any present old Camak makes to him," said Maurice Glick, the second clerk, when he heard it. "But look at the luck of that boy! I never saw anything like it! See how he escaped the clutches of Mrs. Grady and let poor Clayton fall heir to her wrath. If I had his luck I'd never be a clerk."

CHAPTER VI.

ALEX STARTS A TYPEWRITING OFFICE.

A few days after the accident on the stairs Alex was going down to the street, and when halfway down to the door, he met Tessie Craig coming up.

"Oh, I was going up to see you," she said to him.

"I am sent on an errand," he replied. "Can you come along with me? I promise to go slow, even if I get a scolding for it."

"Have you heard of any place for me yet?" she asked him.

"No. I have inquired of several brokers. Come on and I'll tell you what a broker in Broad street suggested to me about you."

She turned and went with him, and as they walked round into Broad street he said:

"A broker said that while he could give a good deal of work to a typewriter, he could not keep one busy. He suggested that you open an office and get work from various offices. That's just the thing to do. You might build up a business that would keep a dozen typewriter's employed."

"Yes, so I might," she replied, "but how am I to open an office, furnish it and buy a machine? It would take several hundred dollars."

"I can arrange it without its costing you a cent."

"You can? How?" and she opened wide her eyes.

"By hiring an office myself."

"Oh, my! Can you do that?"

"I think I can."

"I'm afraid you'd lose the money," she said, shaking her head. "I dare not do it."

"How much a week will you run a machine for?" he asked.

"Ten dollars."

"Then I'll hire you at ten dollars a week and will have an office ready in three days. I'll drum up the work for you. I'll bet there's money in it."

"Why, have you got money enough to do that?"

"I have a few hundred dollars in the bank; but I want you to run the business in your own name. Brokers would give work to a pretty girl like you, when they wouldn't to an ugly kid like me. What do you say?"

"I hardly know what to say."

"Say yes, and say nothing to anybody about it. There are two nice little rooms right alongside of Mr. Barton's that are to rent. If you say so I'll give you the money with which to rent and furnish it."

"But a young girl like me can't stay there by herself and——"

"My sister, who is two years older than I am, is anxious to learn typewriting. She is now a salesgirl on \$7 a week. You can pay her that much while she is learning. Don't worry about the money. I've got enough to carry you through, but you must not let her know I have a cent in bank."

Tessie was persuaded, and when she accepted the offer he gave her a check for \$500, telling her to deposit it with her mother's banker.

When they returned to Barton's office he hunted up the janitor of the building, and told him a young lady wanted the two rooms next door for a typewriting office.

They were immediately taken, a month's rent was paid, and she hurried off to buy the necessary carpeting and furniture for them.

In three days the rooms were beautifully furnished, and two typewriting machines were there. On the door was a neat gold-lettered sign:

"MISS TESSIE CRAIG,
"Typewriting."

"Bully!" exclaimed Alex, when he looked in. "You've got a head for business."

She laughed and said:

"I am frightened at being here all alone, though. Bring your sister down to-morrow."

"I've told her I had engaged a place for her where she would be paid seven dollars a week while learning. She'll come down with me in the morning."

"Hello!" exclaimed old Barton, coming by at that moment. "Opening an office, eh? Well, I'm glad of that. Got some work for you right now. But see here, this boy of mine is not to be permitted to loaf in here. If he does I'll discharge him, sure."

She laughed and said:

"I don't think Alex has any of the loafer in him. I've engaged him to drum for work for me in every office to which you send him."

"You have, eh? Well, now, I call that cheek!" and he looked at Alex and then at her. "You'll have to pay part of his salary, you know."

"Indeed I won't. I'll pay all his salary, and take him away from you if you are going to be mean about it."

"How is that, Alex?" the old man asked.

"It's all right, sir. If I neglect your business fire me out. I've simply promised to speak for her wherever you send me. I'll never go drumming for her on your time."

"And I suppose when I want you I'll find you in here, eh?"

"Then you'll have an excuse to come in yourself," laughed Tessie.

The old broker laughed, went out and soon returned with two hours' work for her. She immediately sat down at her machine and went to work.

The next morning Irene Alston came down with Alex, and was introduced to Tessie. Both girls were beautiful, and created something of a sensation among the brokers and clerks in the building.

Irene went to work taking lessons. The brokers in the building brought in a big lot of work. They wanted to get acquainted with the two girls and work was an excuse.

"I shall have to get two more typewriters at once," Tessie said to Alex, after business closed for the day.

"Get 'em and buy the machines," he replied.

Irene was delighted at the change of scene and occupation. In the store she had to stand on her feet all day. Now she could sit, and when not busy, talk and move about.

The next morning two more machines were bought, and two other girls went to work. Work poured in and the girls kept busy. Tessie allowed no work to go out that was in any way defective. At the end of the week the receipts paid all expenses except rent.

"That is good," said Alex. "I'll bet you can pay next month's rent out of the business."

"I am beginning to think so myself," she replied. "I will have to have two more machines on Monday."

"Get them, and tell me how much money you want."

On Monday there were six girls at work. Irene was learning fast, and Tessie kept her busy on the machine. Tuesday Tessie said to Alex:

"I did some work to-day that made me feel nervous. Mr. Truman sent down two letters to be typewritten. One was to a broker who was up at Bar Harbor. That man once insulted me so grossly that a sight of his name on paper annoyed me. I studied hard to find some way by which I could change the wording of the letter so as to make him lose by it, but I could not. The letter said:

"Keating begins buying to-morrow. Shall we count you in for \$250,000?"

"Keating—Keating!" said Alex. "I know him. He is a member of the Stock Exchange."

"Yes. I think they are going to get up a corner in something."

"Very likely. Truman was in a big corner last winter and scooped thousands out of it. Mr. Barton was in it, too. Shouldn't wonder if he was in this one. They are all afraid of him, though."

Half an hour later Alex was escorting Irene and Tessie up Broadway on their way home. They were chatting at a lively rate when a half drunken man ran into them and nearly upset both of them.

Quick as a flash Alex upset him, causing him to fall heavily to the pavement.

"Good! Good!" cried a half dozen spectators. "Served him right!"

The man staggered to his feet and drew a revolver. The crowd scattered and he began firing at Alex. The girls screamed and ran into a store. For a moment or two Alex stood and stared at him, during which time the man deliberately fired twice at him. Scores of spectators held their breath as they looked on, expecting every moment to see him fall dead. Instead of that he sprang forward and ran full against him, the collision sending the drunken brute rolling in the gutter. Then he snatched the weapon from his hand and pounded him over the head with it till he lay still as a dead man.

Two men rushed in and interfered.

"You have killed him," said one.

"What if I have?" Alex asked.

A policeman ran up, and Alex slipped out of the crowd and

joined Irene and Tessie in the store. The two girls were badly frightened. He laughed and said:

"Come on; let's get away from here," and they hurried out and made their way up the street.

"I was afraid you would be killed," Irene said to him.

"A drunken man can't hit a house," he remarked. "I was more afraid he would hit somebody else."

"Why didn't you run into the store with us?" Tessie asked him.

"I am not in the habit of running from anybody. I guess he has a sore head."

"I heard someone say you had killed him."

"Yes, but I know well that I did not. I cracked him on the head two or three times to knock him out."

They reached home safely, and Irene told her mother of the shooting on Broadway. She was greatly frightened, but Alex laughed her fears away.

The next morning Irene had to go early to the office, as did the other girls, on account of the amount of work on hand. Alex went with her, and so was there nearly two hours before Barton's office opened. That gave him a chance to talk with Tessie. Irene little dreamed that he really owned the business, and was paying Tessie ten dollars a week to manage it. She thought she employed him to do things for her which she could not well do herself.

As soon as the Exchange opened Alex was there to watch Broker Keating. In less than ten minutes he heard him bidding for O. & P. stock, which was then quoted at 62.

"Oh, that's it, eh?" he said. "I heard Mr. Barton say the other day it was a good stock to buy. I'll see Mr. Blaisdell at once," and he hurried round to the bank.

"Buy me O. & P. \$20,000 worth, ten per cent margin. Here's the check for margin," and he hastily wrote and signed a check for that amount.

Then he hurried out to return to Barton's office. At the door he was caught by the arm by a woman with a thick veil over her face, who said:

"You are Barton's boy, eh?"

"Yes'm," he replied.

"Well, I won't make any mistake this time—so take that!"

CHAPTER VII.

SNAKES.

To say that Alex was surprised would be a very mild way of describing his emotions, as the woman gave him a resounding slap on the side of his head and face. He was dumfounded. He knew who she was, and that she had him in her grasp.

She was a strong, determined woman, and he was in for a lively time if he could not get away from her.

Suddenly he thrust his hand into his coat pocket, saying:

"I carry my perfumery with me. I'll soak you with it for——"

"Oh, my!" she screamed, releasing him and making a break through the length of the corridor.

Quick as a flash he went bounding down the stairs to the street.

"Got out of that with only one slap," he chuckled, rubbing the side of his face, "but that was a good one. Lord, but she has a heavy hand!" and then he laughed at he wended his way back to the office. "Sorry I didn't have the skunk's bowie with me, though it would have made the bank suspend payment for an hour or two."

It got out and the laugh was on Barton's boy for a few days. Truman's messenger, Jimmie, teased him a good deal about it.

"Got to keep your eyes wide open, Alex," said Jimmie, out in the corridor in front of the typewriting office. "She is after you. A woman never lets up on a fellow, you know."

"I am ready for her next time," Alex replied. "If you see her send her along and you'll see some fun."

"Got a new sweet-smelling stuff?" Jimmie asked.

"Never mind what it is. Just keep mum and send her along," and as he spoke Alex laid a hand on Jimmie's shoulder. Jimmie felt something cold touch his face. His hand caught a squirming black snake about eighteen inches long, with open mouth and glaring eyes.

His yell was heard from the sub-cellar clear up to the roof. He bounded away toward the other end of the corridor, screeching and yelling, while Alex quietly rolled up the gelatine serpent and returned it to his pocket.

Every broker and clerk in the building ran out into the corridors on each floor to inquire what the trouble was.

"Snakes!" cried Jimmie. "Snakes! Oh, Lord! And it is on me, too!"

Alex returned to the office and sat down.

"What's the matter out there?" old Barton asked.

"Mr. Truman's Jimmie says he saw a snake in the corridor out there."

"Snakes! Is he on a spree?"

"He must be, sir."

"And so young, too! This is a fast age, truly."

A few minutes later Barton's two clerks came back inside, having ran out at the first alarm.

"What is it?" Babcock asked.

"Truman's boy is off his nut. He sees snakes," said Maurice Glick, the dude clerk who had pronounced Alex a fool.

"Sees snakes! What do you mean?"

"Says a snake jumped on him out there in the corridor," explained Maurice, as he resumed his work at his desk.

"Must have the monkeys after him," the old bookkeeper remarked.

"No; he said it was a snake," corrected the clerk.

Babcock's eyes snapped as he looked at Glick, but he said nothing.

In the meantime Mr. Barton went out. Alex strolled into the bookkeeper's department, got a drink of water and returned, passed Glick's desk and dropped the squirming gelatine serpent right down in front of him. He had twisted it up in such a way that it did a tremendous amount of squirming to straighten itself out. Glick gave a yell of terror and went over backward off his stool. The squirming snake fell on him, and the yells and screeches that followed were equalled only by his acrobatic feats.

Babcock and the other clerk sprang up in amazement, wondering what ailed him. Alex snatched up the toy and crammed it into his pocket unperceived by either of the clerks. But the old bookkeeper dropped on to him in a flash. He also dropped back into his chair and roared. Oh, he laughed till tears rolled down his cheeks—but he didn't say a word about his discovery. Alex knew why he laughed, but did not show it.

Glick got up on his feet, seized a chair and cried out:

"Kill it! Kill it!"

"Kill what? What's the matter with you?" Alex asked.

"A snake—it sprang up on my desk there, wriggling and hissing."

"Lord, if he hasn't got 'em, too!" exclaimed Alex, with such a look of surprise and fear in his face that old Babcock fairly roared again.

But Glick was not to be fooled. He saw a snake, and went to work looking for him. The other clerk, equally demoralized, assisted him.

"What in thunder amuses you so, Mr. Babcock?" Glick finally asked the old bookkeeper.

"Why, you, you idiot," replied the old man, and he exploded again.

But he did not explain the cause of his hilarity.

Glick became so nervous he had to go out for a drink. He met a friend and took two drinks, after which he met another friend to whom he explained about the snake up in Barton's office. That meant two more drinks. Thus armed against snake bites, he hurried back to the office. In about twenty minutes the whisky began to get in its work. He tried to sing, but made a failure of it, to the great amusement of Babcock and the other clerk.

Then he got up and executed a dance in the center of the room, giving a whoop with each half dozen steps.

"Bring on (hic) yer snakes!" he sung out. "This is (hic) my day to kill 'em!"

Again the old bookkeeper roared. Truman came in—the broker upstairs—and, not finding Barton in, went in to see what ailed Glick.

"Drunk, eh?" he remarked to Babcock.

"As a biled owl, sir. Never knew him to do so before."

"Is his mother-in-law dead?" the broker asked.

"Hasn't got one," said Alex. "He just saw Jimmie's snake once, and then went out and filled right up to his chin, sir."

Truman laughed and caught Alex by the ear, saying:

"See here! Where is that snake? I want to see him. Out with him or off goes your ear!"

Alex made a wry face, and promptly produced the gelatine serpent. Truman took it, examined it, and showed it to Glick. The clerk glared at it with wide-open eyes and asked:

"Who (hic) killed it?"

"Alex here," replied the broker.

"Gimme your (hic) hand, my boy. Tried (hic) to kill it myself, but it got away," and he wrung Alex's hand with drunken enthusiasm. Truman shook with laughter, and went out to tell the other brokers about the joke that boy of Barton's had played on one of the clerks in the office. Every soul in the building knew all about the drunk long before Glick sobered up. Babcock had to send him home for the rest of the day, lest Barton should come in and find him in that hilarious condition.

Of course Barton heard of it. One of the brokers met him over at the Stock Exchange and told him about it.

"I must see Barnum about that boy," the old broker remarked. "I can't afford to keep him for the free amusement of Wall street. If Barnum takes him you will have to pay for his fun."

He went back to his office and at once peeped into the bookkeeper's room.

"Where is Glick?" he asked.

"Sick and gone home, sir."

"Seen that snake, eh?"

"Yes, sir," and the faithful old bookkeeper chuckled deep down below his waistband.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALEX AND THE CLERK.

The next day, when Maurice Glick came down to the office, he was the maddest clerk in New York. Somebody had given the snake story away to a reporter, and so it was in the paper—a full account of the joke and jag. He knew he could never hope to live long enough to hear the last of it, so he made up his mind to wipe up the floor with Alex Alston, even though his vengeance should cost him his position.

He found Alex in Tessie Craig's office, where six beautiful typewriters were giggling and laughing. He knew well why they laughed, and his indignation got the better of him. The

door was open and he dashed in on him, aiming a furious blow at his face with his fist.

"Hello! Hello!" exclaimed Alex, on finding himself thus attacked. "What's the matter? Got 'em again?"

"Yes, I've got 'em—and got you, too!" hissed Maurice, giving blow after blow that was parried. Alex backed away from him, parrying his blows, till they were out of the girl's office and in the corridor.

"Shut that door, Irene!" he called to his sister, "before a crowd gets in!"

Tessie promptly shut the door, and then Alex began to spar with him. He landed a blow on his nose that caused the blood to flow. Frantic with rage, Glick dashed at him to clinch with him. Alex kept him at arm's length, for he was handy with his fists.

"Here, here! What's this!" cried the burly janitor, coming through the corridor.

"He's crazy," said Alex. "Send for the police."

The janitor caught Glick round the waist and held him with the grip of a bear.

"Be easy now, young man," he said to him. "Keep quiet or I'll turn you over to the police. This ain't no place for a ruction."

"Oh, I'll kill him! I'll grind him to dust!" hissed Maurice, in his rage. "Let me get at him, the imp of——"

"Oh, come now! I'll take you to the station myself," and the burly janitor started toward the head of the stairs with him. That cooled his wrath at once. He promised to wait till some other time, and in some other place, to wreak his vengeance on that boy of Barton's.

"Well, go 'long and behave yourself now," said the janitor, releasing his hold on him.

Instead of going into the office, Maurice hastened back home to change his shirt. Gore from his damaged proboscis had badly stained the immaculate bosom of the one he had on. Then he sat down and wrote a note to Babcock, Barton's old bookkeeper, stating that he was really too ill to report for duty at the office that day.

When Alex heard that he would not be at his desk that day he felt worried.

"Mr. Barton may hear of it and give me a blowing up," he said to himself. "I'd better tell Mr. Babcock about it and see what he says," and he went to the old man and told him about the battle in the corridor. The old man laughed till he cried. But he was Alex's friend and told him he'd make it all right with Barton.

The old broker was late that day, and Alex had time to do some figuring on his investment in O. & P. shares.

"It bought 322 shares at 62—with 36 dollars left over," he said to himself as he looked at the figures. "If the stock goes up like the other did that office in there will pay for itself for one year—and more, too. Miss Tessie didn't dream she was giving me a tip when she told me about that letter. Guess I won't let her know about it just yet. Lord, but she is just a hummer as a typewriter. She keeps those girls busy and makes 'em earn their money. If I make a fortune and tell Irene that I paid her seven dollars a week, she'll do some snorting," and he chuckled as he thought of the game he was playing. "I wanted to get her out of that store, though, and she was anxious to get out and to be a typewriter. Guess she thinks a good-looking typewriter has an advantage over other girls, and I guess she has. She is good-looking, and so is Tessie. Tessie attends to business, though, and when the business gets big enough to run itself—rent and all—I'll ask her to take Irene as a partner."

Mr. Barton came in and put a stop to his cogitations. The old broker sat down at his desk and hastily wrote a note.

"Here, take this over to the Stock Exchange and give it to Keating," he said, handing the note to Alex.

He was off like a flash.

Keating was in the Exchange, surrounded by a group of brokers. He was bidding for O. & P. shares, and the others were supplying him. He had bought several thousand shares, and kept on taking them as fast as they came. When Alex handed Barton's note to him he was bidding 66 for the stock. He ceased for a few moments to read the note.

"Tell him all right," he said to Alex, and then went on. During the few minutes Alex was there the stock jumped up two points—to 68.

"Whew! I'm in for it this time," he said to himself, as he made his way out. "I don't care if it goes up to 80 or 90, or up to the top. Lord, what luck!"

"Hello, Alex!"

It was Jimmie, the messenger for Truman. He planted a blow in Alex's face quick as a flash, saying:

"There's a snake for you!"

It staggered him.

But he recovered quickly.

Jimmie darted away through a crowd and made his escape.

"Lord, but he has given me a black eye!" Alex groaned. "I could stand anything but that. I'll never hear the last of it. I'll give Jimmie something worse than a snake the next time I meet him, and it won't be any joke, either."

He returned to the office and delivered the verbal message of Keating to the old broker.

Before closing time his left eye began to assume the somber decoration that follows a blow. He went into the typewriters' office to deliver work from Barton, and was greeted with:

"Oh, my, what's the matter with your eye, Alex?" from Tessie.

"Fellow hit me," he replied.

"The one who attacked you yesterday?"

"No, Jimmie, upstairs."

She laughed, and he said:

"Wait till I get a chance at him."

He hurried back into the office, for he didn't care to be on exhibition for the pretty typewriters. Just as he entered the office Broker Dubois came out. A moment or two later Barton exclaimed:

"Quick, Alex! Run after Dubois and tell him to come back here a moment!"

Alex sprang out of the office like a catapult, and dashed for the head of the stairs. He saw Dubois going down the steps to the sidewalk, and plunged down the flight in pursuit of him. In dodging one man he collided with another, a burly broker named Glenn.

"There you are—take that!" exclaimed the broker, giving him a punch in the face that sent him tumbling to the bottom of the flight utterly unconscious.

"Shame, shame!" cried a half dozen men, who witnessed the brutal act.

Glenn went on up the stairs, in no wise concerned about what he had done. He was a rich man, a member of a half dozen athletic clubs, and very much given to using his fists with brutal force under slight provocation.

Alex was taken up and borne back to Barton's office by two brokers who knew him. They told Barton what had happened, and the old man was furious.

"I'll give him a taste of the law for this!" he hissed, and those who heard him knew what a good hater he was.

Alex came to in a few minutes, but was in a dazed condition for a while longer. A dozen brokers had come in to see him, or to hear what had happened. Two came in to leave their names as witnesses, if legal proceedings should follow.

"I dodged one man and ran against him," Alex explained, as soon as he could pull himself together. "He gave me a blow in the face that knocked me silly. Who was he?"

"Broker Glenn, of the McLeod Building," replied one of the brokers.

"Well, just wait and see what happens to Mr. Glenn some day."

"If you don't push the law on him I'll discharge you," said old Barton.

"All right, but I've got a law of my own that goes way ahead of the court-house article."

"Good! Good!" laughed the others.

"Come with me now and make a complaint against him," said the old man, whose indignation was almost beyond control.

But just then a broker came in on business, and the matter had to be deferred until after business hours; by that time Alex's face was badly swollen and discolored. As soon as business was over for the day Barton ordered a carriage, and both he and Alex drove to the Tombs to make a complaint against the brutal broker. Half an hour later an officer, armed with a warrant, was going uptown to arrest Glenn.

CHAPTER IX.

"DECORATED BY JOE GLENN"—A TERRIBLE VENGEANCE.

Broker Glenn easily gave bail for his appearance at court the next day, hence was not locked up. He was on hand with his lawyer. Barton's lawyer was there to prosecute, but the old man himself was not present. There were many brokers present, drawn by curiosity, as Glenn was a great clubman and had many friends.

Alex told his story in a straightforward way. His swollen and discolored face eloquently corroborated him.

"Your honor," he added, when he had finished. "He is the biggest coward in New York and has the strength of an ox. He is a great bully, but I never heard of his running up against a man of his own size."

Glenn winced and his lawyer objected to such remarks by the complainant. The judge sustained the objection, as the remarks were out of place on the witness stand.

Glenn then told his story—that the boy dived at him, with the evident intention of sending him tumbling backward down the flight, and that he saved himself by the blow he gave him, adding that he was not aware that he had struck so hard—did not mean to do more than save himself from a fall.

Then witnesses swore that Glenn was vicious in his blow—that he uttered an exclamation that betrayed a ferocious intent when he gave the blow.

"It was a cowardly blow," said the judge, very curtly. "I fine the prisoner fifty-dollars for disorderly conduct."

He paid the fine and left the court. Money was nothing to him. He had plenty of it.

Of course old Barton was angry at the light punishment dealt out to the bully. But he knew that a fine was all that could be imposed unless the case went up to a higher court.

"Just let me fix him," Alex said; "I'll make him sick yet."

"How?" the old man asked. "You don't want to get arrested yourself, you know."

"Look at this. I am going to wear it everywhere I go about Wall street till my eyes look all right again," and he produced a piece of pasteboard about ten inches square, on which was painted in inch letters:

"See my decorated optics!"

"Decorated by Joe Glenn."

"With his little fist!"

"Lord, what a genius!" gasped the old man. "Here, take a note over to the Exchange to Blaisdell," and he hastily wrote

a note and gave it to him. Alex hung the card over his neck, like a blind man's announcement of his blindness, and hurried over to the Exchange.

The brokers over there were a howling mob over the rapid rise in O. & P. shares, which had gone up to 75, and was still climbing up. In his eagerness to find out about the stock Alex forgot all about the card hanging against his breast till Broker Truman espied it and yelled.

Then others looked at it and yelled. In a few moments the brokers ceased bidding for stocks and crowded about Barton's boy. They read the sign and laughed. Broker Upham remarked that Glenn deserved it, but that it was a punishment that equaled Cain's for the murder of Abel.

Glenn was there. He heard what it was and went over to see it.

"Take that card off or I'll kill you!" he hissed, making a grab at it.

Alex jumped back and sung out:

"You're coward enough to do it, but I won't take it off!"

Glenn dashed at him. Alex was too quick for him. He dashed out through the messenger entrance into New street. Glenn rushed after him. Out in the street Alex wheeled and dashed some kind of fluid into his face and over his clothes. He fell to the ground gasping for breath. Men and boys clapped their hands to their noses, and fled as from a deadly pestilence.

Alex had given him a bath of that terrible Chinese odor. He threw away the little wide-mouthed bottle and fled with the rest of them.

Office doors and windows were heard slamming on all sides, to shut out the terrible odor. The doors of the Stock Exchange were tightly shut.

As for Glenn, he rose to his feet a sick man—deathly sick at the stomach. He gave up his breakfast and dinner right there in the street. Some said he also gave up the three meals of the day before. He staggered away. Everybody fled from him as from a leper. He tried to get a carriage to take him home, but the cabbies fled in dismay. A policeman tried to arrest him as a nuisance and gave it up. He ran, gagging and gasping for breath.

In the Stock Exchange the brokers were rolling on the floor in convulsive laughter. They screamed and guffawed till the clock struck three and business for the day was ended. Then they made their escape by way of Broad street and dispersed to their offices to laugh and roar all the more over the plight of the gilded bully.

He finally made his way down to the river and jumped into the water, holding to a rope till clothing could be brought to him. Then, wrapped in a blanket, he was led into a saloon where, in a little rear room, he made the change that rendered life worth living once more. He filled himself full of whisky, and went home in a carriage.

In the meantime a policeman opened the hydrant and flooded the gutter where Alex had thrown the bottle, and carbolic acid was poured copiously over the spot where Glenn had fallen so ignominiously.

"That boy of Barton's can clean out Wall street quicker than a score of Bengal tigers," remarked the janitor of the Stock Exchange.

"That boy of Barton's has evened up accounts with Glenn," said the brokers, one and all.

"Glenn is a ruined man," said Broker Upham. "He'll never live long enough to hear the last of it."

"That boy of Barton's ought to have a collection taken up for his benefit," said another.

Barton himself didn't hear of it till someone came in and told him. When Alex came in the old man asked:

"Did they notice the card?"

"You bet they did. It broke up business over there at once."

"Did Glenn see you?"

"You bet he did, and made for me. I skipped out."

Some twenty minutes elapsed ere the old man got the balance of the story. Then he roared and slapped Alex about in his joy.

CHAPTER X.

"WE ARE A PAIR, AIN'T WE?"

The next day Glenn awoke to find himself the laughing-stock of all New York. That boy of Barton's was famous. Old brokers came in to see him and shake his hand. Among those who called was Banker Comak, the stout old gentleman whose fall he had broken on the stairs.

"This is the first day I have been out since my fall," he said to Alex. "But I haven't forgotten you, my boy. You saved me at a great risk to yourself. Here's a gold watch for you and five \$20 goldpieces. When you want a friend come and see me. I'll stand by a boy like you as long as I have a dollar," and he crammed the watch and coins into Alex's coat pocket as he spoke. Then he went out and Alex stood there looking at the old broker, who said to him:

"You forgot to thank him, Alex."

Alex wheeled, ran out and overtook the old banker at the head of the stairs.

"I want to thank you, sir," he said.

"That's all right, my boy. I'll owe you thanks as long as I live," replied the old gentleman.

He was returning to the office when he ran into Jimmie. He was going to give him the return blow he owed him, but Jimmie dodged him, dropping a note in doing so, and skipped off downstairs. Alex laughed, picked up the note and read it.

It was from Truman to Keating:

"Unload as easily as you can. We have a bigger stock to deal in for Monday."

"By George, what luck!" and he wheeled and ran down the stairs as fast as his heels could carry him. He rushed into the bank and said:

"Sell me out at once, please."

"All right," was the reply.

Then he tore up the note into fine bits, and went back to the office, where he found Jimmie looking for the lost paper out in the corridor.

On reaching the top of the flight of stairs Alex stopped and watched Jimmie's search for the lost note. He knew what he was looking for, but did not say anything to him about it.

Jimmie was worried and had a frightened look in his face. Even his feud with Alex was forgotten.

Tessie Craig opened the door of her office and saw him anxiously searching every nook and corner of the corridor.

"What are you looking for, Jimmie?" she asked him.

"I dropped a note here somewhere," he replied, without looking up.

"What sort of a note—money?"

"No. It was a note from Mr. Truman to Mr. Keating over at the Exchange, and he told me to hurry with it."

"Then run upstairs and tell him you have lost it. It may be very important. He can write another one."

Tessie had good judgment and a cool head for one so young. Jimmie hesitated.

He dreaded the result of his carelessness.

"Why don't you run up and tell him?" Tessie asked.

In sheer desperation Jimmie ran up the stairs and disappeared from view.

"That was the best thing he could do," Alex said to Tessie, going up to the young typewriter. "You have a very level head for a pretty girl."

"And you have a very silly one to-day," she retorted. "What's the matter with you? I won't have any compliments during business hours."

"There's where your head is level again, pretty as it is," he remarked.

"That ugly, decorated face of yours has turned your head," she returned. "I won't accept compliments from you, even after business hours, till you get handsome again."

"That's the girl of it. No business in that. Glad you think me handsome when my face is all right. I think you are very pretty all the time."

"Oh, my!" she laughed, darting inside and closing the door behind her.

Alex chuckled and went to his own post, saying softly to himself:

"Jimmie's loss is my gain. But for that note I might have held on too long and got a squeeze. Jimmie will catch it," and he chuckled as he sat down to wait for orders.

The door opened and Maurice Glick came in. Alex looked up at him and their eyes met. The clerk had a dark shade under his left eye, but Alex had both optics in full mourning. The sight of his face filled Glick's soul with unutterable joy.

"Oho, oho!" he exclaimed, a broad grin illumining his face.

"We are a pair, ain't we?" said Alex, grinning, too.

"Who gave 'em to you?" Glick asked.

"Mr. Babcock," Alex answered.

"God bless him!"

Glick went to his desk, hung up his hat and coat, preparatory to going to work at his desk.

"Back again, eh?" said the old bookkeeper. "Glad to see you. How do you feel to-day?"

"I'm all right," and then he went over to the old bookkeeper, extended his hand and said:

"I want to thank you for decorating Alex's eyes. They are beautiful. How did you come to do it?"

The old bookkeeper looked at him over his gold-bowed spectacles and asked:

"Did he tell you I did it?"

"Yes, sir."

The old man chuckled and exclaimed:

"That boy is having more fun with you. I advise you to let him alone."

Glick flushed red in the face and retired to his desk, while the good-natured old bookkeeper kept up a quiet chuckling for some minutes.

Just before business closed for the day, Alex got a chance to see Blaisdell and asked him what his shares sold for.

"They went at 84—and just in time, too," was the reply.

"That was good enough," Alex remarked, hurrying out and returning to the office. There he figured up.

"Bought at 62, sold at 84," he said, as his pencil made a rapid memoranda on an old envelope. "That's \$22 a share. I had 322 shares. That pans out \$7,084. Whew!" and he whistled. "Bless that girl! I'm getting rich!"

When business closed he went into Tessie's office. It was Saturday afternoon, and the girls were winding up the week's work as fast as they could. He had just spoken to Tessie when he saw Irene beckoning to him to come over to her table.

He went there, and she said:

"Some of the girls say a man gave you a gold watch and \$100 in gold to-day. Is it true?"

"Yes; Mr. Comak gave it to me."

"The old gentleman who had the fall on the stairs?"

"Yes."

"Well, it was kind of him. Mother will be so glad when she hears it."

"Here's one for you," he said, laying a \$20 goldpiece down on the table before her.

She sprang up, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed one of the girls. "You ought to let some other girl have your brother!"

"He gave me this," said Irene, holding up the goldpiece.

"Whew! Twenty dollars! I don't blame you. I'd hug and kiss him myself for half that!" and all the girls laughed.

"That's the sort of a brother to have," Tessie remarked.

"He has always been a good brother," said Irene.

"I'm going to wait for him," said a tall blonde. "Such fellows are scarce nowadays."

"Guess I'd better get out to save the other pieces," remarked Alex, going toward the door.

The girls laughed, and Tessie followed him out into the corridor.

"The receipts for the week are forty-two dollars above expenses," she said to him. "What must I do with the money?"

"Raise your pay ten dollars a week more as manager," he replied.

"Oh, my! Do you mean that?"

"Yes—and raise Irene to ten dollars. She does good work now, does she not?"

"Yes; she is a fast writer."

"Very well. Tell her not to let the other girls know it."

"Well, you are kind, Alex, and—"

"No compliments during business hours, you know," he said, interrupting her.

She laughed, and he added:

"You and Irene must go out for a dinner with me, so hurry up and get those girls off."

She went back and in a little while the girls left, leaving only Irene and Tessie in the office. Then Tessie gave Irene \$3 more, telling her that hereafter her salary would be \$10 a week.

Irene was overjoyed, and she hugged and kissed Tessie with a great deal of enthusiasm. Then they went out to dinner with Alex.

They were a happy trio.

As soon as they were seated a couple of well-dressed men passed their table.

"Hello!" ejaculated one of them. "There's that boy of Barton's. Just look at his face, will you?"

The two men turned and looked at him. They were both brokers, for he had seen them in the Stock Exchange, but did not know their names. They had evidently been drinking a little, for they did not seem to care whether the two girls heard their remarks or not.

Sitting down at a table near by they stared at the two girls, and one said:

"Those are two pretty girls he has with him. The boy's luck runs in every direction."

"I think we ought to go away from here," Irene whispered to Tessie.

Alex took a pencil from his pocket and wrote on the margin of a paper:

"If you two loafers make any more remarks about my sister and her friend, I'll give you a smell of Glenn's cologne."

"ALEX ALSTON."

"Give that to those two men over there," he said to the waiter. He did so and the two brokers on reading it made a hasty exit from the restaurant.

CHAPTER XI.

ALEX GETS A GOLD WATCH.

"Why, what did you write on that paper, Alex?" Tessie asked, when she saw what effect it had on the two men.

"I simply warned them that I had two ladies in my charge," he replied.

Tessie rose up, walked over to the table which had been so abruptly vacated and secured the newspaper and returned to her seat. There she sat down and read the note.

A silvery scream of merriment burst from her, and then she clapped a hand over her mouth, as if to prevent any more noise issuing therefrom. Irene read it and then she gave vent to a similar explosion.

"Glenn's cologne!" she whispered to herself. "Oh, dear!" and she nearly went into convulsions.

"How quickly they skipped out," said Tessie, joining her in the merriment.

Alex chuckled and said:

"You see, I am the cock of the walk."

"Yes, indeed. Did you know them?" Tessie asked.

"I don't know their names, but I know that they are members of the Stock Exchange. They were feeling their oats, have plenty of money and were on the mash. I mashed 'em."

It was a sumptuous dinner. Both the girls chided him for his extravagance in ordering it.

"Well, now, I am sure you two ought to take it as a compliment."

"I do," said Tessie, "and forgive you with all my heart, only don't do so any more."

They went up Broadway a happy trio. And when Irene told her mother the news she wept for joy. Alex gave her the \$80 in gold and said he was satisfied to keep the watch.

It was a fine watch. On the inside of the lid was an inscription:

"From Comak

"To Barton's Boy,

"Friends for Life."

"Well, I like that," said Alex, when he read it. "Why in thunder didn't he put my name in it?"

Irene laughed and said:

"Why, all the brokers down there know you as 'Barton's Boy,' and not half of them know your real name. I wouldn't be angry about that."

"You can bet I am not angry," he replied. "I'll take all the gold watches I can get in the same way."

With his face still showing the ugly effects of Glenn's fist, Alex spent the day at home Sunday. But on Monday morning he was on the lookout at the Stock Exchange to see what stock Keating would buy. Truman's note spoke of a big stock for that day.

It took him some time to find out, and then he was not certain about it. Not until he saw it go up one point did he make up his mind to buy it.

He had now nearly \$10,000 in the bank. The stock was H. & D., going at sixty-seven when he left the Exchange, and went round to the bank in Broad street.

"Buy me 1,000 shares of H. & D. on margin," he said, giving a check for \$6,700.

In ten minutes the shares were bought, and Alex went back to the office.

"Say, have you seen Glenn?" Truman asked him, coming in to see Barton on business.

"No, sir. Is he alive yet?"

"Yes, and has blood in his eye," was the reply.

"I'm ready for him. Is he downtown to-day?"

"Yes."

Alex looked serious, and old Barton said to him:

"Look out for him."

"I'm not afraid of him."

Truman reported that up in his office, and the news flew that Barton's boy had said he was ready for Glenn.

Glenn had come down to his office that day for the first time since his terrible defeat by that boy of Barton's. Many of his friends went in to see him. To their surprise he owned up that he had enough.

"Nobody but a fool ever tackles a skunk the second time," he said, "and I hope I am not a fool. Hereafter I'll not only give that big boy the sidewalk, but the whole street if he wants it. He can clean out the entire street if he wants to. I could take a Winchester and kill him at long range, but I don't care to do that."

His friends laughed, and he laughed with them. It was a bitter dose for him, but he had sense enough to know that it was wise on his part to take it, and take it he did.

When Alex heard of it he was very much astonished.

"Calls me a skunk, does he? Well, I don't blame him for saying he has enough. But I am not going to take any chances with him. He is a brute and a coward, and so I won't trust him. Unless he fights me at long range I'll settle him the next time he tackles me. He had no right to give me those black eyes as he did. They'll stay with me a fortnight yet. I've shown him up, though, and I guess there are very few people in New York who has any respect for him."

His words were repeated to Glenn, but that broker laughed and said:

"I've got enough. I don't want any more," and his friends thought more of him for it.

But his deep hatred of Alex was the one hobby he nursed in secret, and he made up his mind to bring about his ruin at any cost through the agency of others.

The old broker sent Alex over to the Exchange several times that day, so he had a chance to watch the booming of H. & D. shares. To his surprise the price made a sharp advance to 70 in a couple of hours.

That set the brokers wild. Rumors of a consolidation with another road sent the brokers in a rush for the stock. When the day ended it had gone to 73, an advance of six points.

The next day the Exchange was like the sea in a storm from the time it opened till it closed. The last bid was for 80. The third day it opened at 81 and the roaring of the excited multitude on the floor was greater than ever known before. Some of the brokers seemed to be utterly beside themselves in their frantic efforts to get the stock.

"They are all crazy over there, sir," Alex said to the old man.

"Yes; most men are crazy, more or less, at all times. What's the latest?"

"H. & D. was going at 89 when I left there, sir."

"Keating still buying?"

"Yes, sir."

The old man remained quiet for a time and then went out.

"Let me see that watch Comak gave you?" Babcock asked Alex a few minutes later.

Alex pulled it out of his pocket and handed it over to him. He looked at it carefully and remarked:

"It's a fine watch, my boy. You ought to take good care of it."

"I am trying it," Alex replied.

Glenn did not even look at it. He seemed to have lost all interest in everything connected with Alex Alston.

A messenger from a Broad street broker came in with a note from a Lauker for Barton. Babcock took charge of it.

"They are all crazy over at the Exchange," the messenger said. "H. & D. has jumped up to 95. Old Peyser has been

taken plumb crazy, and sent home in charge of two policemen."

Alex slipped out and ran over to the bank.

"Sell me out—quick!" he said.

In five minutes Blaisdell had sold his shares at 95. Half an hour later they were going at 98. The wildest excitement reigned, and thousands gathered in the streets about the Exchange.

"I guess I'm safe on that deal," Alex said to himself. "There is no excuse for getting excited, anyway."

"Hello, Barton!" greeted a broker, tapping him on the shoulder. Alex looked up, and saw a big stout broker, and was about to inform him that his name was Alston, when he was silenced with:

"My typewriter is sick, and I've an awful lot of work for her on hand. Get me a good one right away, and it's five dollars for you, my boy."

"Send it over at once to Mr. Barton's office," said Alex, "and six girls will get at it like ducks after corn."

"Six of 'em! That means quick work. Just what I want. I'll send it over at once," and he hurried away. Alex ran up and dashed into the typewriter's room, saying:

"I've got a big job for you."

"What is it?" Tessie asked.

"Work, of course. Did you think it was ice cream?"

The girls laughed, and Tessie said:

"Bring it along."

It came in about ten minutes. The stout broker came with it to explain what he wanted done. He looked at all the girls and seemed to be struck with Irene.

"Above all things," he half whispered to Tessie, "don't let any of your customers see it," and then he went out.

It was a lot of work—nearly \$50 worth, and had to be done quickly.

She read it over and saw that it was about the consolidation of two big railroads out west—agreements for signatures and all sorts of transfers.

"I need two more girls and two more machines," she said to Alex.

"Get 'em at once," he said.

She did, and the entire force worked till six o'clock.

Tessie told Alex what the work was.

"Ah! It's going to be a big deal, I guess. Let me know the names of the two roads."

She told him and he set to work to find out about them—on the map.

The S. & T. was to be absorbed, or consolidated with the trunk line. The stock was down low—41. The trunk line was at 107, and was to guarantee the stock of the S. & T.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "That is a bonanza! I'll go for that as sure as fate!"

The next day the bank settled with him on the H. & D. deal. He had bought at 67 and sold at 95, making \$28,000 less commission. The cashier looked at him over his glasses and said:

"You are a lucky lad, Alex?"

CHAPTER XII.

"BARTON'S BOY SENT YOU THERE!"

Alex had now acquired a feeling of confidence in himself. He felt solid, and no longer cared to engage in boyish games and pranks. The all absorbing desire to make money and become a power in Wall street took possession of him.

His face had now become clear. The discoloration under his eyes had disappeared, and he was the handsome youth again. The \$37,000 he had in the bank gave him a feeling of power such as he had never felt before.

The day the typewritten work was delivered to the stout

broker Alex went over to the bank and ordered 8,000 shares of S. & T. to be bought on his account, giving a check for \$33,000 to cover margins.

Blaisdell was amazed when he got the order. He didn't know who it was for. The stock was down low in the list, and nothing had been done with it for months. He had no difficulty in getting the stock.

The stout broker, whose name was Meyers, was in the Exchange at the time, and heard of the purchase. He seemed to be dismayed for a minute or two, and went over to Blaisdell.

"Do you want any more of that stock?" he asked.

"No. I had an order for that block."

"Who buys it?"

"I don't know. The firm ordered the purchase. Want to unload any of it to-day?"

"No. It has been dormant so long I was surprised, that's all."

Meyers came over to see Tessie.

"Did anybody see that matter?" he asked her.

"No, sir—only the girls, and each one had detached parts. Anything wrong about it, sir?"

"I don't know. I thought to-day that perhaps somebody might have seen and read some of it. It is very important sometimes to keep such papers a profound secret."

"I am aware of that, sir, and try to guard all my work closely. I hope always to get more work from my patrons."

"The work is first-class. I shall certainly send you more when I have it."

"Thank you, sir."

He kept his eyes on Irene all the time he was talking to Tessie. Irene was busy and had not taken any notice of him.

That evening Tessie paid Irene a visit at her home, and told her that Meyers was evidently fascinated.

"Why, I hadn't noticed him," Irene said, her face flushing and eyes sparkling. "For heaven's sake, introduce him if he asks you to."

"No, indeed. No spooning in business hours or at the office," and Tessie shook her head in a very determined way.

"You are right, my child," said Mrs. Alston. "Nothing but business down there."

"My! Isn't it business—the most important of all—for a girl to catch a rich husband?" exclaimed Irene, laughing.

"Husbands are rarely caught that way, my child. If he wants you for a wife he will seek you in your home."

Days and weeks—three of them—passed, and the S. & T. shares had not advanced a penny. Alex was puzzled. He did not know what to think of it. Meyers visited the typewriters' office nearly every day, bringing work. He talked pleasantly with Tessie, but devoured Irene with his eyes.

"May I ask the name of the young lady near the rear window there?" he asked her.

"Yes. Her name is Irene Alston. She is a sister of that boy of Barton's."

"Oh, indeed! I know her brother well. I think he is one of the brightest boys I ever met!"

"So do I—and she is as bright as he is—in a different way."

"Indeed! I should like to know her," he remarked.

"Men of your wealth and standing ought not to flirt with poor girls, Mr. Meyers," and Tessie looked him in the eyes as she spoke.

"I never do. I am a single man, and always admired the sex. I admire Miss Alston very much, though I've never seen her outside this room. She is the last woman in the world I would dare flirt with, for she has a terrible brother, you know."

Tessie's silvery laugh was heard out in the corridor. She couldn't help it. She knew what he meant.

The broker finally asked Alex how long he wanted to hold that S. & T. stock.

"Hanged if I know. I may have made a mistake. Just hold it a week longer, please."

Two days later the stock went up half a point. The next day it went up two points. Somebody was quietly picking it up in small lots. At the end of the week it had gone up to 46, a rise of five points.

"Just hold on to it," Alex said, and a few days later it began to be called for in the Stock Exchange. Then it went up, up, daily, till a rush was made for it by all the brokers. Meyers was buying it, and he took all that came his way.

Finally the news of the consolidation leaked out, and it went up at a bound to par.

"Sell me out quick!" Alex ordered, and it was done.

"Good Lord!" he gasped. "I've made a fortune at one blow!" and he took off his hat and fanned himself.

He went down on the street and looked about like one in a dream. He could not realize that he, Barton's boy, was richer than many members of the Stock Exchange.

"I am worth half a million in cold, cold cash," he said to himself, as he stood there on the curb round in Broad street, his hands thrust down deep into his pockets. "Hope I won't turn fool and sass the old man. If I can keep my grip on my good luck I can double it. Did ever a boy have such luck? Tessie's thousand dollars did the business for me. I'll even up with her some day. Luck! I wonder if it is luck—or my good judgment in dealing with stocks? I've never bought except on a tip, so it's just luck in getting the tips. Here's \$472,000 made in one deal. When the commissions come out I'll have a half million. Lord, but I'll make things hum in the next deal," and with that he made his way round to the office, went up to his post and quietly sat down to await orders from the old broker.

The old man had made money in the deal himself—over \$50,000—and was in a jolly good humor when he came in.

He tapped his bell for Alex, who hurried into the private office.

"Take this over to Meyers' office," he said to him, "and bring back an answer," and he gave him a note addressed to Meyers.

Alex hurried over to Meyers & Heywood's office. He found Meyers there with a half dozen railroad men in a private room. They were having a fine old row.

"I tell you, somebody betrayed us," he heard one man say, the sounds coming through the transom. "Somebody had that block of 8,000 shares lying by waiting for us. Sending that work out to be typewritten did the business."

"I don't think so," said Meyers. "I cautioned the lady to be careful, and from what I've seen of her since, I am satisfied the leak was not there."

"Well, I am not convinced. We are out over \$400,000 through somebody's carelessness, and I want to find out who that careless one is."

"So do I," assented Meyers. "We would have trusted typewriters here if we had them. So I don't see how we can blame them without some proof."

"Barton's boy sent you there, you say. Just keep your eye on him while you are looking for the leak."

Alex's hair stood on end.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BIG DEAL AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

Broker Meyers was somewhat rattled when he saw Alex. He knew that he had heard what had been said about the typewriters, for the transom was open.

"How long have you been waiting here?" he asked him.

"About ten minutes," was the reply.

"Well, wait till I write an answer to this note," and he went into his private office to write it. When he came out with it he followed Alex out into the corridor.

"See here, Alston," he said to him, "come this way. I want to see you," and he led the way to a corner.

Alex went with him, wondering what he could want of him.

"You heard what was said about that matter of the type-writing, didn't you?" Meyers asked.

"Yes—I couldn't help hearing it."

"So I supposed. You heard me say that the leak could not have occurred there, did you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now, I want to ask you not to let Miss Craig know anything about it. It would hurt her feelings. She does the best work I ever saw, and I am going to give her all we have to do. When our typewriter recovers and comes back I'd like to have Miss Craig take her on and let us have one of hers. That will save throwing her out of a situation. But don't tell her so until the other girl comes back."

"All right, sir."

"You'll be careful now?"

"Yes, of course," returned Alex.

The broker shook hands with him and turned away. Alex hurried back to the office with the reply to old Barton's note.

"Tessie little dreams that what she told me was the leak those fellows complained of," he said to himself, as he went bounding up the stairs that led to the old broker's offices. "Hanged if that isn't the way to get tips. It might be a good idea for me to take charge of the business and look out for tips."

Barton was out when he returned. So he laid the note on his desk and went in to see Tessie. She was busy giving out work to the girls, and the machines were ticking all over the room. On her desk lay quite a lot of work waiting to be called for. He glanced over the sheet of paper lying nearest to him. It was a copy of a contract for the leasing of the A. & P. Railroad to the C. & B. for ninety-nine years. The C. & B. guaranteed six per cent interest to the bond and stockholders. He sprang up and went out without having spoken a word to Tessie. Out in the corridor he met Mr. Truman, the broker.

"Mr. Truman," he asked, "what is A. & P. stock going at to-day?"

"Seventy-seven yesterday. Don't know what the latest is," was the reply.

"Thank you, sir."

He went out and made his way over to the bank.

"I want to see Mr. Blaisdell," he said to the cashier.

"He is over at the Exchange," he was told.

He went to the Exchange and found the broker there who did the buying for the bank.

"Will you please tell me what A. & P. stock is worth to-day?" he said to him.

"It is going at 77 1-4 to-day. Was going at 77 yesterday—a slight advance."

"Is there much of it on the market?"

"Yes; something like 30,000 shares. It is not regarded as gilt-edged, by any means."

"How is C. & B.?"

"That's gilt-edged—way up—112 to-day."

"Thank you. I want to buy A. & P. on the quiet. Do you think you could pick up 20,000 shares for me?"

"Easily—no trouble at all. Glenn is buying the stock to-day, and it may go up a point or two."

Alex returned to the bank and ordered 20,000 shares to be bought for him, giving a check for \$160,000 for margins. That

done, he walked out in a leisurely way and returned to the office. Ten minutes later Blaisdell, in the Stock Exchange, bought a block of 5,000 shares of the stock for him.

Broker Glenn was buying the stock, too, but was not offering any for sale. An hour later the price was 77 1-2. At that figure Blaisdell bought 5,000 from Truman.

Just before the Exchange closed for the day the other 10,000 shares were obtained at 78.

Naturally the brokers noticed such heavy purchases. Glenn was surprised to find Blaisdell buying the stock also, and asked him whom he was buying for.

"The order came from the bank. Don't know who ordered it," he replied.

Glenn got hold of 6,000 shares in small lots, and the price went up rapidly after that. The next day it went up to 83 by noon, when a great scramble for it began in the Exchange. Broker Glenn was buying for the C. & B., and thus had a strong backing. But he, as well as the great corporation for which he was acting, became astounded at the way the stock was held back.

The C. & B. managers ordered him to cease bidding for the stock, and try to pick up only those shares that were offered. But the brokers had become excited, and it went up, up till it reached 90. There it stopped.

"Guess I'd better see Blaisdell about it," Alex said to himself. "It may drop back to the old price."

He saw the broker, who told him to go to the bank and give the order. He did so, adding:

"Tell him to go slow—1,000 or 2,000 at a time so as to avoid scaring 'em off."

Then he went back to the office.

"Where have you been?" old Barton asked him when he came in.

"Over to the Exchange, sir."

"Well, you have no business to be anywhere else but here unless I send you," the old man said. "You don't want to forget that. Take this over to the Exchange to Mr. Keating," and he handed him a note.

Alex took the note and hurried out with it.

Keating was buying A. & P. as fast as he could get it. Alex handed him the note. He read it and said:

"Tell him all right!" and went on with his buying.

Alex hurried back with the verbal message, delivered it, and then went to his corner to await orders. The old broker called him back and asked:

"What was he buying when you gave him my note?"

"A. & P., sir."

"At what figure?"

"Ninety and a quarter, I believe, sir."

The old man turned to his desk and began making figures on a sheet of paper. Alex stood there near the desk and waited.

"Run over again and see if it goes up any higher," the old man said to him.

He hurried out, and was soon standing under the visitors' gallery in the Exchange looking on at the scene. The stock was going up again. He saw Blaisdell and asked:

"Have you sold?"

"Yes—at an average of 90."

"All right. I am satisfied."

He went back and told Barton of the rapid rise in the stock. The old man seemed to be satisfied, too.

"I might have made more by holding on to it," thought Alex, as he went to his post. "But one never knows when the bottom is going to drop out of a stock, so it is best to get a good safe grip while you can. I've made about \$240,000 out of that little tip picked up on Tessie's desk."

"Take this in to Miss Craig and tell her to let me have it

as soon as possible," the old man said to him as he gave him some papers to be copied. He took them and hurried into Tessie's office with them. Tessie was out, so he gave them to Irene to copy.

The door opened and Broker Meyers entered with some papers in his hand. He took off his hat, bowed low to her and asked:

"Is Miss Craig in?"

Said Alex, before Irene could answer him: "My sister here has charge while she is out."

"Ah! Happy to know you, Miss Alston. You know me—Meyers?"

"Oh, yes, sir," Irene replied, blushing, for she was aware of his eagerness to get acquainted with her.

"I am in a hurry for these and will have to wait for them," he said.

"Take a seat, sir, and I'll see if I can have them copied at once."

She went to one of the girls and put her to work on the papers, after which she returned to the desk. He entered into conversation with her, and said:

"Do you know I've been waiting to make your acquaintance, Miss Alston, ever since I first saw you. I am a single man, was never in love in my life and never cared a snap about even getting acquainted with any young lady till I saw you in here two weeks ago."

Alex heard it and looked up at Irene with a smile on his face. She was blushing furiously, and was so confused she could not make any reply. But Alex broke in with:

"All of which means, in plain United States, that he is stuck on you, sister."

Irene was worse flustered than ever, and Meyers blushed and stammered:

"I—er—ah—you've hit it, Alex!"

"Of course I have. Bless you, my children! May——"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake go away!" cried Irene, pushing Alex away. "You are too impudent for anything!"

"Want me out of the way, eh? Why, those girls there would all stop work to watch the billing and cooing if I should leave. I——"

"Thank Heaven you have come!" exclaimed Irene, as Tessie entered the room.

"Why, what's the matter?" Tessie asked, in a half exclamatory tone.

"Business is getting mixed," Alex replied, laughing merrily. Irene turned on him, and said in a half tragic tone of voice:

"If you don't behave yourself I'll send for a policeman and have you arrested."

"Just go ahead. I haven't any of Glenn's cologne with me now. Mr. Meyers will pay my fine. He loves me for my sister's sake."

Meyers laughed and Irene retreated to the rear room, blushing furiously.

"Well, will somebody please explain?" Tessie asked, looking from one to the other.

"I brought in some work," said Meyers, "and Miss Alston was acting for you in your absence, when Alex came in and proceeded to have fun with us. I am in doubt as to what I ought to do—hug him or kill him."

CHAPTER XIV.

ALEX GIVES HIS MOTHER A SURPRISE.

As might have been expected, Broker Meyers had work for the typewriters every day after Alex had fun with him in their office. Both he and Irene forgave him, for it was the beginning of their courtship. He never failed to go to her table and talk with her when he came in. As she was Alex's sister, Tessie did not interfere.

One day he asked her to let him visit her at her home, and a sad look came into her face as she shook her head.

"We live in a small flat way uptown on the east side," she said. "We hope to move soon. I cannot receive company there at present."

"Don't let that interfere. I was born in just such a home myself and know all about it."

"Well, wait till I ask mother about it," she replied.

She loved him, and was anxious to have him call on her.

On her way uptown that afternoon she said to Alex:

"Mr. Meyers wants to call on me at our home. I had to refuse him. Oh, this poverty crushes every hope of my heart," and her eyes filled with tears.

Alex's heart was touched. He loved his beautiful sister, and wanted to see her and his mother happy. He was silent for some time, and then said:

"We ought to move to another and larger flat, and we will next month."

"How can we?"

"Easily enough. Just tell him to wait ten days, and then he can call every evening if he wishes."

"Have you got any money?" and she gave him a searching look as she asked the question.

"Yes—a little nest egg."

"How much?"

"Six hundred dollars in bank."

"Why, Alex!" and she seemed dumfounded at the news.

"Now don't go and blurt it out," he said to her. "I have been doing a little speculating on margins. To-morrow you can take the day off and go flat-hunting. Go over on the west side and get a good seven room flat. I'll give you a check for rent and furniture. Don't let mother know till we get her into it. It will be jolly to see her surprise."

Irene was beside herself with joy.

She could now have a parlor in which to receive her friends—a thing she had long ardently wished for. On the stairs she stopped to hug and kiss him in her joy. Their mother wondered what had happened to make the two children so happy that evening. But they did not tell her.

The next day Alex told Tessie that Irene had gone flat-hunting and would not be downtown that day.

Meyers came in, and went away a very much disappointed man when he failed to see her. But she came in just before three o'clock, and told Alex she had rented an eight room flat in a fashionable quarter, and had selected the furniture.

"It is to be ready in three days," she said, "and then we can move in."

Alex got the number and street from her, and went up with her to see it. He was pleased. He then bought paintings to adorn the parlor, and, unknown to her, had a fine piano sent in, together with many ornaments to beautify the home.

Then they took Tessie into their confidence, and told her of the surprise they were preparing for their mother.

"We want you to let us use you just once," said Alex. "We want to get mother to the new home by telling her you have invited us there—sent a carriage for her. She'll come out then, and we'll have a high old time when she learns that it is to be her home after that. You and your mother must be there to receive us, and we'll have a royal supper served up."

Tessie entered heartily into the spirit of the thing, and the next morning Alex and Irene hurried home with the story they had made up for their mother, and soon had her ready for the carriage. It came in due time, and they locked up their little flat and went down to the street.

Half a hundred children gathered at the spot, wondering how it had come about that the Alstons could ride in a carriage. They entered and were driven away.

Tessie and her mother received the widow with a great deal of cordiality. They led her through the flat, and set her down to a table groaning with a load of good things.

"Oh, you have such a lovely home, Mrs. Craig," said Mrs. Alston, when the feast was over and they had adjourned to the parlor.

"Oh, this isn't my home," Mrs. Craig replied. "I only wish it was!"

"Why, whose is it?"

"It is yours. All this is a surprise—Alex and Irene have prepared for you. You ought to be a happy mother with two such children."

The widow was speechless with amazement. She sat there and gazed from one to the other of her children. Irene ran into her arms, kissed her and said:

"Oh, it's Alex's work, mother. He is just the best boy on earth!"

"Alex! Alex! Is this my home?" the mother asked.

"Yes, mother, and every dollar it cost is paid. I have the receipted bills."

Then she broke down—cried in her joy, and kissed everybody in the flat. Alex broke down, too, light-hearted as he was, and tried to hide his tears. But Mrs. Craig caught him in her arms and kissed him, saying:

"You have made your mother happy. That ought to make you so the rest of your life."

"I am sure I am as happy to-night as she is," he replied. "If I can keep her happy I shall always be so myself, for she has been a good mother to me."

"And you have been a good son," said his mother.

"That's right," he said. "You tickle me and I'll tickle you," and a burst of laughter told that the tears had ceased to flow.

Then Tessie, who had some skill as a musician, sat down at the piano and played many merry tunes. She sang, too, and Irene sang with her. Then Mrs. Alston sat down and astonished them with her skill in manipulating the keys. She had been a fine performer in the days of her maidenhood. Disaster had swept her father's fortune away ere she married, and her husband had nothing but love and a bare support to offer her.

"Oh, I am so glad you can play, mother!" cried Irene. "You can soon teach me to play as well as you can."

"And it won't be so lonesome for you while we are away during the day," added Alex.

Thus was the loving mother made happy by the two children for whom she lived. Her eyes sparkled, and the glow of youth seemed to bloom in her pale cheeks again.

Alex escorted Tessie and her mother to their home but a few blocks away, and then returned to find his mother still at the piano, singing the old songs of her girlhood days.

She made him tell her how he had made so much money, and he explained to her the workings of the margin money in Wall street speculation. She had heard him speak of it before, but never dreamed that she would ever receive any benefit from the system.

"How much money have you got left after paying for all this?" she asked him.

"Several hundred dollars," he replied, "and I expect soon to have as many thousands. I am just getting my hand in now."

"Well, you know more about it than I do. I won't interfere with you in any way, but simply say be careful—be cautious."

"I believe I am built that way, mother," he replied. "I am trying to make a fortune, and never think of buying a stock until I know that it is going up. It is time for all young widows to be in bed if they want to look beautiful in the morning."

The mother and daughter laughed and kissed him good-night, after which they retired.

Alex had pleasant dreams that night, and when he arose in the morning and heard his mother singing in the kitchen, he was even happier than on the evening before. He and Irene left the house together, and reached the office before Tessie did. The latter soon joined them, and the work of the day began.

When Meyers dropped in he was made happy by being told by Irene that they had moved, and that she could now receive her friends in a comfortable home.

"Then look for me this evening," he said.

He called and was surprised at the air of comfort and refinement that pervaded the flat. He stayed to a late hour and then left, more deeply in love than ever.

CHAPTER XV.

DEATH OF THE OLD BROKER.

A week or so after the events recorded in the preceding chapter, Alex was in the office when Broker Meyers came in and asked if Mr. Barton was in.

"Yes, sir," Alex replied, going into the little office to inform his employer of the broker's presence.

"Tell him to come in," said the old man, and a few moments later the young broker was seated in the little office in a close, earnest conversation with him. He remained half an hour and then went out.

The old man rang for Alex, and the latter promptly responded.

"Bring me—a—glass—of water."

He looked up and saw a change come over the kindly old face. Darting into the other room he filled the glass with water and hurried back. As he passed Babcock's desk, he said:

"You had better come in, sir."

"Ah? What?" the old bookkeeper ejaculated.

But Alex had passed in to the little office with the glass of water. He sprang up and followed him.

The old broker was seated bolt upright in his chair, staring straight at the pigeon holes of his desk.

"Here's the water, sir," said Alex, depositing the glass on the desk.

"My God's, he's dead!" gasped Babcock, the moment he saw the old man's eyes.

"Lord, no!" exclaimed Alex, starting back, as though stricken, glaring up at the rigid form before him.

"Dead as a herring," said Babcock, laying a hand on the old man's arm.

Alex darted into the other room and told Glick and the other clerk. They both ran in to see for themselves.

"Good Lord, it's true!" said Glick, turning pale and staggering to a seat.

Alex then went into the typewriter's room and told Tessie about it. She was shocked—horrified—and dropped down into her seat, saying:

"Oh, it is awful!"

"Shut the door and keep it shut," he said to her. "There'll be a crowd up here as soon as the news gets out."

He went out and Tessie sprang up and shut the door. When he returned to the office, Babcock said to him:

"Run down and send a policeman up here to keep back the crowd. Then send a messenger for the coroner. I'll telegraph to his nephew uptown."

Alex ran down and told the policeman on the block, who went up and stood guard at the door. Then he sent a messenger for the coroner. That done, he returned to the office. Just as he got there Broker Truman met him at the door. The policeman barred the broker, saying:

"You can't go in there, sir!"

"Why not? I have business with Mr. Barton."

"Mr. Barton is dead, sir."

"Eh? What? Dead? In there?"

"Yes; died in his chair."

Truman was shocked to such a degree he had to lean against the wall for support. It was the worst shock of his life.

Then he made his way back to his own office, where he sank into a seat and told what had happened downstairs. The news flew through the building with astonishing rapidity, and in less than five minutes the corridor was jammed with brokers and clerks.

The officer kept them back, admitting no one but such as the old bookkeeper chose to have inside. The crowd remained there for hours. The old man's nephew, the nearest relative in the city, came down and gave directions as to the disposition of the body.

It was taken charge of by an undertaker and carried away. The nephew told Babcock to take charge of the office and contents until the estate could be settled, promising to see that his salary should be continued till the settlement was reached.

"How about the clerks and the messenger, sir?" Babcock asked.

"Let the messenger get another place. If there is anything for the clerks to do, keep them; if there is no work for them, let them go."

"Then they'll have to go, for they have no work to do. Business stopped when he stopped, sir."

Alex heard him, and tears came into his eyes.

"I can get another place," he said to Babcock, after the nephew had gone.

"I hope so. But I don't know that I can. I am an old man now. I was with him over thirty years."

"And I nearly three years. I am going to come in and see you every day."

"Do so, but if you get another place you must attend to your work."

The old broker had outlived a wife and two children. He was over eighty years old, and had a fortune of over \$1,000,000, the bulk of which was left to his nephew by will.

To Alex's surprise a codicil of the will gave him \$10,000, Babcock got \$50,000, and the two clerks \$5,000 each.

Babcock was utterly overcome with emotion when told of his good fortune. He had a large family—three very pretty girls among his flock. Glick and the other clerk felt rich. They both declared they would open a broker's office and give Wall street a shaking up.

"What are you going to do with your money?" Glick asked Alex, in the office the day they got the news.

"I am going to give every dollar of it to my mother," he replied.

Old Babcock grasped his hand and said:

"My boy, your heart and head are both right. You are a good boy."

Irene came running in, a thing she never did when Barton was alive, and said:

"Alex, Tessie says you are given \$10,000 in Mr. Barton's will! Is it true?"

"Yes," Alex replied.

She wheeled round and ran out, very much excited.

"Lord, but she is a beauty!" exclaimed Glick, in an undertone. He had never seen her before. He was smitten hard, and he made up his mind that his \$5,000 would enable him to win her, hands down.

The old man remained at the office in charge of the books and papers of the old broker for some weeks. Alex made his headquarters in the typewriters' room, drumming up work for them. Several brokers tried to get him as messenger, but he said he had an interest with the typewriters and would stay there.

At last the legacies were paid and a sign—"to let"—was placed on the door of the office.

"Mr. Babcock," Alex said to the old man. "I am going to take these rooms and open an office in them."

"Eh, what?" and the old bookkeeper glared at him over his gold-rimmed glasses. "What will you do?"

"Speculate in stocks and bonds. I want you to keep your place as general adviser, and——"

"Well, let me begin by advising you not to do anything of the kind," said the old man. "Ten thousand dollars would not last a week in the business."

"Well, now, I've been doing a little business on margin during the past few months, and the result is I can put up ten times ten thousand in cold cash," and Alex looked him full in the eyes as he spoke.

"Oh, come now," and the old bookkeeper shook his head. "This is no time for jokes."

"Come over to the bank with me and I'll prove it."

The old man went and came back a very much astonished man. He agreed to accept the offer Alex made him, and bought new books and paper for the business. Alex rented the offices and put in some new furniture and carpets. Barton's sign, which had been there many years, remained on the door. Above it a new one was placed, bearing the legend:

ALEX ALSTON,

"Barton's Boy,"

Successor to——

The old bookkeeper laughed and shook his head when he read it.

"Let it stand," Alex said.

"I fear it will do more harm than good," remarked Babcock.

"I am known as 'that boy of Barton's,' and I think it will do good for me to accept the title."

Irene almost cried with vexation when she saw the sign. But Tessie and the other girls laughed and said he was a cute fellow.

All the brokers in the building laughed when they saw it, but Truman advised him to take it down.

"Has set up for himself, eh?" exclaimed Broker Gleam, when he heard about the new sign on the door. "That \$10,000 has turned his head. It won't last sixty days. The fairies are good to those who wait, and I've been waiting for a chance to get even. The Lord have mercy on him when I get my grip on him!"

Alex heard it, through a friend, and laughed in a quiet way.

"Don't let him know you told me," he said to his informant. "If you hear of any way I can tempt him to go for me let me know. We'll have more fun then on a former occasion when he went for me with such a savage energy—and didn't get me."

CHAPTER XVI.

ALEX SURPRISES THE STREET.

It seemed very funny to the old brokers in Wall street when they heard that Barton's boy had rented the old offices and placed his name on the door as the successor of the old man whom they had so long feared. Some of them laughed loud and long, and actually called at the office to see him. They found old Babcock in charge, and laughed and joked him about his position there.

"Ain't running this thing yourself, are you?" Broker Dubois asked.

"No," laughed the old man; "I am on salary, just as when the old man was here."

"How long do you think he'll hold out?" Dubois asked.

"As long as he lives, I guess."

Dubois laughed and went out.

He met Alex coming out of the typewriters' room, and greeted him with:

"Hello! I see you have set up for yourself."

"Yes, sir; I prefer to be my own boss," laughed Alex. "If you can put anything in my way I'll promise not to place any bent pins on your chair."

Dubois laughed heartily, and repeated what Alex said when back in his own office. Others laughed and said he would make fun for the street as long as the \$10,000 lasted.

Upham called on him a few minutes after Dubois left, and asked what he was dealing in just then.

"I am buying J. & L. shares just now," Alex replied. "Have you got any?"

"Yes—a thousand shares. What are you paying for it?"

"Fifty-eight, for all I can get."

"I'll bring down 1,000 shares right away," said Upham, hurrying out of the office.

"What's up about J. & L.?" Babcock asked Alex.

"Consolidated with D. & P. trunk line. Keep mum."

"Have you got that straight?" the old bookkeeper asked.

"Yes—guess I have."

Upham returned in ten minutes with the shares.

"Here they are—all in one block," he said.

Alex looked at the paper for a few moments, and then sat down and wrote a check for \$58,000, payable to Upham & Co. Upham looked at it in an uncertain way and said:

"It's all right, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Have it certified, please."

"Certainly. Will you attend to that, Mr. Babcock?"

"Yes, with pleasure," said the old man, taking the check and going over to the bank with it. Upham waited till he returned with it duly certified.

Alex put the stock in the old safe. Half an hour later Upham came back with a block of 2,000 shares.

"You can have them at 58," he said.

"I'll take them," Alex replied, calmly, writing a check for \$116,000. "You want that certified, too, I suppose?"

"Yes, of course."

"Well, just wait till I go over and have it done. I haven't secured a messenger yet."

"Let me take it over," said Babcock. "I began as a messenger, and really enjoy running about once more."

"Very well; here it is."

In ten minutes he came back with it, duly certified, almost as much astonished as Upham was. Both of them could see that there was no margin business in those two purchases. Upham went out and had a tale to tell Dubois a half hour later.

"I have his certified checks for \$71,000," he said, "and there's no margin in it. The boy has money behind him. Whose is it?"

"Maybe Babcock has put in his \$50,000," he suggested.

"Even then there's \$114,000 from some other source. He is paying 58 for J. & L."

"He is, eh? I'll see him about that. I have 2,000 shares of that which a customer wants me to sell for him," and he hastened to his office to get the shares.

Upham was anxious to know about it, and waited till Dubois returned with a check for \$116,000 duly certified. He gave a long whistle expressive of his astonishment. Here were \$290,000 cold cash paid on the boy's check. Where did the money come from?

He went out in quest of more J. & L. shares. He found them in three different places, 1,000 shares each, and got them

to sell on commission. Alex gave him a certified check for \$174,000.

"I want 2,000 shares more," Alex said.

"I'll get them for you. Whom are you buying for?"

"Myself," was the prompt reply. "Bring 'em in and get your money."

Just before business closed for the day the 2,000 shares were brought in, and Alex had 10,000 shares locked up in the square old iron safe. He had paid out \$580,000 for them, and still had \$120,000 to his credit in the bank.

"We'll sit down and wait awhile now," he said to Babcock. "Just enter the amount on your book how much I paid for them and from whom they were bought."

The old bookkeeper was at his wit's end for once in his life. Here was this boy of seventeen years of age handling immense sums of money like an old veteran financier. He had been told that he had \$100,000, but here nearly six times that amount had been paid out in one day.

Where did the money come from?

He would try to find out.

"On whose account is it held?" he asked, after he had made the other entries.

"Alex Alston's," Alex replied.

The old man turned round and looked over his glasses at him.

Alex didn't appear to notice him, but sauntered out of the office and went in to see Tessie and the girls.

Meyers was in there, standing by Irene's desk and talking low to her.

"Do you allow that?" he asked Tessie, smiling.

"It's a dead case of mash on both sides," she half whispered, "and I really haven't the heart to interfere. I would not permit it with the other girls, though."

Alex laughed.

"He was up to the house that night and stayed till eleven o'clock. Guess I'd better take a hand in and have some fun with them."

"They are too far gone for that. I hardly think they would like it."

The girls were all preparing to go home. Meyers whispered to Tessie:

"Miss Irene and I are going out to lunch and want you and Alex to join us. What say you?"

"I say yes every time," she replied.

They went to Delmonico's downtown place and the lunch for the party cost Meyers \$20.

"Pretty expensive crowd, eh?" Alex remarked when he saw the check.

"I enjoyed it a thousand dollars' worth," Meyers returned.

"Well, you are pretty far gone. Do you want my blessing?"

"Yes, and your mother's, too. We are engaged."

"The deuce! And I haven't had a chance to strike you for anything. The young brother hasn't had a fair show in this case."

They laughed heartily and Irene blushed furiously. Tessie kissed her and congratulated her.

Meyers accompanied them home and asked Mrs. Alston's consent to the marriage. She gave it promptly, and Irene was too happy to even trust herself to speak for a time.

The engagement was to last six weeks. She was not to appear at the office downtown any more as a typewriter. Tessie was told the next day by Alex that she would have to get another girl in her place.

"Get one who can run the business after you marry," he added.

"I have no intention of getting married," she replied.

"All the same you are going to marry me when I am a little older."

She glanced at him quickly, blushed and asked:

"Do you want me, Alex?"

"Of course I do, and I am going to have you, too."

"But you have never told me you loved me."

"What's the use? You knew it all the time."

Her eyes sparkled and cheeks glowed. She loved him for his honesty and manly qualities, and had often wished he was two or three years older. They were both about the same age. He was making money and had a head for business.

"What do you say?" he asked. "Will you wait for me?"

"Yes."

"Good," and he grasped her hand and shook it as he would have shaken a boy's hand. "You are the smartest and prettiest and sweetest girl in Wall street. Irene has caught a broker and so have you. Oh, you typewriter girls!"

She laughed and Alex went out to go to his own office.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALEX AND TESSIE TALK BUSINESS.

A few days after Alex bought the 10,000 shares of J. & L. stock he was astonished at seeing three pretty girls, stylishly dressed, enter the office in a shy, timid way and look around as if in quest of someone. The door of the little private office was open all the time now since he kept no errand boy, hence he saw them when they entered.

Just as he sprang up to meet them one of them espied the old bookkeeper, who was also advancing to meet them, and cried out in a sweet, silvery voice:

"Oh, there he is!" and all three ran to him. He kissed them all and then, turning to Alex, said:

"These are my daughters, Alex."

Alex bowed and so did the girls, and then the happy father introduced each one by name. Alex shook hands with them, and said to the old man:

"Where in thunder have you been keeping 'em all this time? I never saw any of 'em before."

They all laughed, and the old man replied that they would never call on him there before for they greatly feared old Barton.

"And we are not afraid of you," said Josie, the youngest and sauciest of the lot, at which they all laughed again.

"I am glad to hear that," he replied. "I am terribly afraid of girls myself."

"Oh, my! Papa told us you were a regular masher, and that when we came here we'd have to look out for you."

They laughed and chatted and ran all over the office, making themselves at home with a freedom that was charming. Alex thought them all three beautiful, and told the old bookkeeper that he ought to be a happy man with such girls in his home.

"I am, my boy—I am. They are good girls, and I've got three more just like 'em growing up."

"Six girls! How many boys?"

"Three boys. There's a crowd of us!" and he laughed.

"I should say so."

"Come over to Brooklyn and see us some evening. Those girls can sing like birds, and——"

"Oh, dear! Just listen to that!" cried the eldest girl. "He thinks we are just the best going, when we are about like the rest of girls—no better and no worse. That isn't his fault, though. He would have spoiled us badly but for mother."

"That's it—give it to him," laughed Alex. "The mother does all the spanking, I suppose."

They screamed, blushed and changed the subject.

As it was near noon, Alex sent out and had a splendid lunch

brought up for them. He went into Tessie's office and persuaded her to come in and join them.

Tessie sized them up, and when they went away she told Alex that their mother had dressed them up and sent them over for him to see.

He laughed and told her she was jealous. But she shook her head and denied it, adding:

"Just wait and see. They will come over often and do all they can to win you. Did they ask you to visit them?"

"Oh, yes; the old man did, too."

"But not until they knew you had ten thousand dollars?"

"No. I never saw them before to-day," he replied.

She laughed, and he said:

"There are not girls enough in this world to take me away from you."

Her eyes shone, and she looked him full in the face, saying:

"I am going to have faith in you. I shall never be jealous. I am too busy to be so."

"Do you know I am thinking of adding your office to mine, and make them all one big suite, furnishing them lavishly?"

"What for?"

"So it will appear that I am doing a big business. You know how appearances go in New York. Besides the rent of three rooms is too much for you to pay. You will have none to pay then."

She agreed and it was done. It added to the mystery that seemed to hang over him since his purchase of 10,000 shares of J. & L. stock. Nearly every broker in Wall street had heard of that transaction, and all wondered who was backing him.

"Why did he buy that stock?" many asked. "It is as still as a mountain. A week has passed and it is still at 58."

"Maybe he bought for a customer," suggested another.

"That is the only reasonable solution. But who in thunder is the customer?"

"That's the question," remarked the first speaker.

A few days later Broker Glenn began buying J. & L. stock. It went up one point at once. The next day it went up to 70. The brokers were astounded, and all sorts of rumors were afloat. Glenn kept on buying. Alex took his shares over to the bank to be sold by Blaisdell on his order.

Upham came to him and offered him 70 1-4 for his holding.

"Haven't got any," he said.

"The deuce! Who has 'em?"

"Somebody over in the Exchange, I guess," was the elusive reply.

"Why did you sell them?"

Alex stuck his tongue in his cheek and looked knowing. That was all the reply he made.

Glenn sent a broker to Alex to get his shares.

"I parted with them several days ago," was Alex's reply.

Then at least a score of others called on the same errand, only to leave with the impression that he had sold. Yet he had told no one he had sold. It was a diplomatic evasion. But they never suspected it.

The excitement over the stock grew so intense that a vast crowd gathered about the Stock Exchange. The street was blocked, and the police had to clear a passage for vehicles and pedestrians.

"I knew that consolidation was going to take place several days ago," Tessie said to Alex at his desk, when the shares went up to 77, "and never once thought about it. I might have made something out of it."

"Yes. What did your mother do with that thousand dollars?"

"It was invested in Central Railroad stock."

"That's good stock all the time, but it doesn't pay much."

"It is safe, though."

"Yes—absolutely."

"If I could borrow a thousand I'd try it on a margin some day."

"If you'll let me manage it or advise you I'll put up \$1,000 for you."

"Oh, you good boy!" she said. "I won't buy a thing without consulting you."

"Very well. I'll get the cash and bring it to you. Keep your eyes open, and when you get a tip let me know."

Half an hour later she went to her banker and deposited \$1,000.

J. & L. went up to 90, and Alex ordered his shares to be sold. It went in one and two thousand lots, all at 90.

He made over \$300,000 on the deal—getting the tip from the papers lying on Tessie's desk.

That evening he said to his mother and Irene:

"I've made a big pile in Wall street. You can now have a whole house, a carriage and horses, with all the servants necessary."

"Why, how much have you made?" his mother asked.

"Enough to make you a present of a \$50,000 house, or even more. You and Irene had better take a carriage and go house-hunting. When you find one to suit you, don't bother about the price, but just let me know where it is and I'll buy it."

They found the house the next day. It was a \$70,000 house uptown, and he promptly bought it, taking the deed in his mother's name. Then he gave her a check for \$10,000 for the furnishing of it.

Irene told Meyers about it, and the broker was astonished.

"Alex puzzles all," he said. "He seems born to good luck. I saw Glenn last evening. He had heard that Alex had made a fortune out of J. & L., while he only got the regular commission for buying it."

"He says he would give me a house, too," she remarked, "only he thinks I ought to remain with mother—and I think so, too."

"That includes me, too, I hope?"

"Of course. I could not do without you," and she laughed merrily, like the happy girl she was.

Glenn was laughed at a good deal on the street by the other brokers.

"Why, you just played into the hand of that boy of Barton's," some of them said to him. "You boomed the stock up for him."

"Yes, and then he unloaded on me. But it wasn't my funeral. My clients were able to stand it."

"Of course; but they looked to you to gather in the stock on the quiet before the street found out about the consolidation."

"Yes; but he had it and would not sell. How he got an inkling of the consolidation puzzles me."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE NEW MESSENGER BOY.

The constant nagging of the brokers soon made Broker Glenn mad. He vowed to set a trap for Barton's boy and scoop him for all he was worth. He little dreamed that Alex had a million in cold cash ready for anybody who could get it in a deal.

Since it had become known that Alex had good money behind him the brokers treated him with consideration. He was pointed out to others as he passed them in the street. Banker Comak, who had given him a gold watch and \$100 in gold out of gratitude for his conduct on the stairs one day, often dropped in to see him.

"You've had a streak of good luck, my boy," the banker said to him one day.

"Yes, sir; but I've had to keep both eyes open all the

time," he replied. "Every man in Wall street seems to be eager to get his fingers in my fleece."

"Of course. They see that you are a tender lamb, with fine, silky fleece. The temptation is great, my boy, very great."

"Yes. I s'pose it is. But none of them has got any of my wool yet."

"No, but look out. Don't let 'em catch you napping. If you get into a squeeze and need any money come to me."

"Thank you. I may want to put up margins with you some day."

"All right. I've got a pile of money in my vault for that sort of thing."

But the days and weeks glided by, and Alex had little to do. Babcock grew restless and blue. He wanted to be busy.

"Just keep quiet now and be happy," Alex said to him. "You've been working hard all your life. Take it easy. I've made enough in J. & L. to pay your salary for ten years, even though I don't make another dollar."

"But that isn't business."

"The deuce is isn't! It has paid so far, hasn't it?"

"Yes, but we are idle now."

"But we are not losing anything, and I am having a good time. Just keep still and wait till I get another chance at 'em. Once a year is enough when I get a good whack."

The old bookkeeper smiled, and his three pretty daughters came over once or twice a week to give Alex a chance to fall in love with one of them. They were introduced to Tessie, but did not take well to the typewriter. Tessie smiled and attended strictly to business. But she was always included in the invitation to lunch.

One day Tessie said to him:

"Alex, I must have an errand boy. I have so much work now that one is absolutely necessary."

"I'll get you one. One will do for both of us."

He was going home that afternoon when he met a newsboy on the corner of Broadway and Wall street. He had often bought papers from him, but did not know his name. The boy was about sixteen years old, with a frank face and laughing blue eyes.

"Guess he'll do," he said to himself, as he looked him over. "I'll try him, anyway."

He beckoned the newsboy to him and said:

"You've been selling papers about here a long time. You ought to know all the offices in Wall, Broad and Nassau streets."

"You can bet that I do, Cully," was the reply. "Want a paper left for you anywhere?"

"No. I know where a messenger is needed at good pay, and I am thinking you are just the wildcat for it. What do you say?"

"I'm your cat."

"Got any good clothes?"

"Nope. These are my best."

"Well, you'll have to have a new rig, your hair cut, nose wiped and patent-leather shoes on——"

"That leaves me out, Cully."

"Oh, no, it doesn't. I'll rig you up."

The boy looked at him in a very dubious way. Alex smiled and said:

"You can have ten dollars a week if you try hard to earn it. What is your name?"

"Tim Healy. The boys call me 'Tiger Tim.' What is yours, Cully?"

"Alex Alston, but the boys call me 'Barton's boy.'"

"Gee whiz! I know you. Got lots of rocks an' a bottle of sweet-sellin' stuff. Say, I'm your cat!"

Alex laughed, adding:

"Come along with me, then, and we'll see about a rig for

you," and they went to a clothing store where two suits of fine clothes were soon bought, with shoes, hat and shirts and underwear. They were sent to his home while he went to a barber's and had his hair cut and a bath. Alex stayed with him, and soon saw that he had picked up an original character. He paid all the bills, and then gave him directions where to report the next morning.

When he saw Tim the next morning at the office, he hardly knew him. The clothes fitted him snugly, making him as handsome a lad as any he ever met. He shook hands with him and led the way up to the office. None of the girls had arrived yet, so he sat down and told him what he was to do.

When Tessie arrived Alex introduced Tim as her messenger. She looked at him and said:

"Why, he's the newsboy! My, what a change!" and then they all three laughed.

The girls all declared him to be the handsomest messenger in the street. Tim was as polite to them as a French dancing master. He was prompt and unerring in his duties, and Tessie told Alex he was a jewel of a messenger.

A few days after Tim went to work as a messenger, a big burly peddler entered the typewriters' office, with combs and brushes for sale.

Tessie told him nobody in there wanted his wares.

But he was persistent, and started in to interview each girl, expatiating on his goods with insolent volubility.

Tessie ordered him out. He merely grinned at her. It was evident that he intended to force some one of the girls to buy in order to get rid of him.

"Tim, call an officer!" said Tessie to the messenger.

"Want him put out?" Tim asked.

"Yes—quick!"

Tim rushed at the peddler, caught him round the waist, lifted him off his feet and ran out into the corridor with him. At the head of the stairs he unloaded him with a toss.

The stairway was littered with combs, brushes and a score of other things, as the owner of them rolled in a heap to the bottom of the flight.

The peddler groaned, swore in a half dozen tongues and proceeded to gather up his wares. A crowd quickly gathered, and the police arrested the fellow and marched him off to the station-house.

Tim quietly returned to his place and sat down. Tessie and the girls looked at him in utter amazement. He smiled and said:

"Guess I'm policeman enough, Miss Tessie."

"My, yes!" she said.

Alex came in to tell Tessie that a peddler had fallen down the stairs and scattered his wares from the top to the bottom. She laughed and told him how it was.

"Oh, Tim threw him out, eh? Give me your hand, old man," and the two shook hands. "These are all my girls in here, and you are to take good care of them, you understand!"

"Yes," and Tim nodded his head affirmatively; "but it's a lot of girls for one chap to have."

"Yes, so it is; but they are all good girls, and they are yours when I am not here."

"Gosh! Send in some more fellows for me to throw out."

"Don't throw out anybody till Miss Tessie tells you to. You are the right boy in the right place."

The girls treated Tim with a great deal of consideration after that, and it made him as proud and self-respecting as any broker in Wall street. One of them fell in love with him. She was two years older than he, but that did not matter, in the least.

Finally Alex got a tip, but not in the usual way. He became suspicious of it, and made an investigation through an-

other party. To his surprise he found that Glenn had sent a friend to him with it.

"Oh, that's the trap he has been talking so much about, eh?" Alex said to himself. "Well, I'll see about it. It's O. & D. stock. I'll find out about it."

He went to the New York office of the company and made inquiries. The stock was selling for 67, and there were but 14,000 shares out. The balance—16,000—was owned by the management. One man had 9,000 shares. He got his address. Another had 1,000, and still another had 4,000.

Alex quietly bought them all up, and put them in his safe.

A few days later he met Glenn in a party of brokers in Dubois' office.

"I am looking for O. & D. shares," he said to Dubois. "Have you got any?"

"No. How many do you want?"

"All I can get."

"What are you giving for it?" Glenn asked him.

"Sixty-eight cold cash."

"Give me an order for 10,000 shares at that price, and I'll get it for you."

"I'll do it—but you must make it a sale—say to deliver me 10,000 shares within ten days at 68."

"Very good. Draw up the contract."

Dubois' bookkeeper drew up the contract and Alex put up \$10,000 with Dubois as a clincher.

Then he straightway went to Blaisdell and instructed him to buy O. & D. stock, offering 68, 69, 70, and so on up to 100 on the floor of the Exchange.

Glenn set out to get the stock.

To his amazement not a share could be had. It went up, up till it got to 90.

He met Glenn in the street.

"How about O. & D.?" he asked him.

"I have two more days yet."

"Are you waiting for it to go up to par?"

"No. I am waiting for it to go down again."

"Do you intend to pay if it does not?"

"Wait and see."

His coolness rattled Alex.

He instructed Blaisdell not to buy, and then quietly unloaded through another broker at 90.

Glenn bought 10,000 at 90 and delivered to Alex at 68, losing \$220,000 under the contract. Alex immediately sold them again at \$91-2, thus making over a half million on the deal all around. He showed Dubois the figures, and soon all Wall street knew that Glenn had been squeezed by Barton's boy to the tune of \$220,000.

Glenn was in a rage.

All the brokers were laughing at him till the crash came.

The stock tumbled and a small-sized panic ensued in the Stock Exchange.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BLIND POOL.

Broker Glenn was the sorest man in Wall street when he learned the truth about the deal in O. & D. stock. To lose a big sum of money is always hard to bear, but when the whole street joins in the laugh against the loser, it becomes doubly hard. Glenn gritted his teeth in silent rage, and swore to get even with that boy if it took ten years.

Tessie heard about it, and when she saw Alex, she said to him:

"They say Mr. Glenn doesn't love you any more, since you squeezed him so hard the other day."

"Guess he won't love you any more, either, when he knows all," Alex replied.

"Why, what have I done?"

"Oh, you squeezed him, too!"

"Me! How?"

"Your husband was in the deal, and you've got some of the money."

"Why, Alex!" and she dropped into a chair and stared up at him. "I—I didn't know it!"

"Well, you know it now. I have deposited \$20,000 to your credit at your banker's."

"Alex! Alex! Oh, my!" and she covered her face with her hands. She was almost speechless with joy. It was a happy moment for him, for he worshiped her. He stood there looking down at her. Finally she looked up at him and said:

"It will all come back to you some day."

"Not a penny of it," he replied. "Give it to your mother. She is a good-looking widow and may want to marry again. I've just given my mother a \$70,000 house and \$30,000 in cash. Give the widows a chance."

She smiled through her tears, and would have said some sweet things to him but for the girls at the other end of the room. Her heart was in a flutter all the day over the good fortune that had come to her. Alex stood near her desk for half an hour watching her. And many a loving smile he got, too.

Suddenly Babcock, the old bookkeeper, came to the door and called him out. He promptly followed him out into the corridor.

"Mr. Comak is in the office waiting to see you," the old man said to him.

"Ah! I'll see him at once, then," and he hastened to meet the old banker.

"Pardon me," he said, bowing low on entering the little office. "I had just stepped in to the typewriters."

"Yes, a beautiful typewriter interferes with business very often," laughed the old banker.

"They never interfere with me," Alex replied.

"You do the interfering yourself, eh?" and the banker nudged him merrily.

"I guess that's the case. I am not as busy as they are."

"You can afford to go slow now that you have pretty near all of Glenn's money."

"I've made all I need for expenses for some time to come. Glenn was itching to force his money on me, and so I had to take it."

"Well, are you tied up in any way—financially?" Comak asked.

"No, sir—not just now. Why?"

"I want you to chip in and join a blind pool."

"What for?"

"To control a certain stock. We want \$10,000,000. Have \$8,000,000. How much can you put in?"

Alex looked just a bit mystified.

"I could put in a million," he said, "but I'd have to know all about it before I did."

"It's a blind pool," and Comak shook his head. "Nobody can know even the name of the stock save the operator. We guarantee fifty per cent in thirty days."

"Guess I'll keep out of that sort of thing," remarked Alex.

"What's the matter? What are you afraid of?"

"I am afraid to put money into anything I know nothing about," he replied. "Why do you work in that way?"

"Because secrecy is absolutely necessary. When only one man knows the secret we can hold him responsible for it."

"But who is responsible for him?"

"I am."

"That's security enough, I am sure. Yet I don't like to go it blind."

"The fact is, you are not going it blind. You and the others

simply place your money in my hands for me to invest at my own discretion. It is simply a question of confidence in me."

"That's all right, then. I'll put in \$250,000."

"Oh, double that," said the banker.

Alex shook his head.

"I was never in such a thing before and don't like to risk any more. I am only a boy—a little lamb, you know."

Comak laughed, took the check and went out. At the door he met the three Babcock girls. They were coming to see their father.

"Hello!" he exclaimed in a fatherly way. "Are these your sisters, Alex?"

"No, sir—wish they were," Alex replied, laughing. "They are Mr. Babcock's daughters. Aren't they beauties?"

"Oh, you horrid boy!" cried all three in a chorus.

Then he introduced the banker to each of them. He shook hands with them in a pleased way, saying he was glad to meet three such rosebuds in one group.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Josie, the youngest and most vivacious of the three. "All the Wall street men are alike. They flatter the girls, and——"

"Oh, he doesn't mean to flatter you. He's a rich widower with millions in bank and nobody to love him."

Comak laughed heartily, the girls almost screamed with merriment, and Alex shut the door to keep the banker among them for a few minutes. Babcock came in from the rear room and joined them.

"Babcock, you are blest," Comak said, extending his hand to the old bookkeeper. "If I had them in my house I would call my home a heaven on earth."

"You can't have but one of them," said Alex, "but you can have the first choice."

The girls laughed, blushed and declared him too saucy for anything.

"Can I have my choice, Babcock?" Comak asked of the old bookkeeper.

"Yes—if the chosen one is satisfied," he replied, laughing.

"Well, then, all of you go out to dinner with me an hour from now, and I'll make a choice—if you girls are willing."

The three sisters were thunderstruck. They looked up at him, at Alex and then at their father.

"I've been a widower several years," the banker explained, "and have had no time to do any courting. The sight of these sweet faces reminds me that I ought to have one in my own home. I don't know which one I want. If you girls will agree to it I will make a choice after the dinner, marry her within a week and give her carriages, horses, servants and \$10,000 a year pin money. Then I'll do my best to make her happy. What say you, girls?"

"Oh, my! What must we say, father?" the eldest of the girls asked, turning to her father.

"Lord bless me, child!" exclaimed Babcock. "He is a good man. I've known him more years than you have lived. Say yes if he asks any one of you to marry him."

"Of course we will," cried Josie, laughing and glancing shyly up at him. "I think old men's darlings are the happiest wives in the world."

Comak looked smilingly at her, chuckled her under the chin and said:

"You are a sweet little angel."

"Of course I am—the sweetest in the lot."

They laughed merrily, and Alex exclaimed:

"Well, I'm jiggered!"

"What's jiggered you?" the old banker asked.

"Why, you—and these girls. I've been trying to get up courage enough to make a choice, and now you come along, old and ugly, and get the pick of the lot."

"Why, he isn't ugly!" cried Josie, striking him with her fan. "No good man is ever ugly!"

"You are right—I beg your pardon, Mr. Comak. She has spoken a great truth. No good man is ever ugly."

Comak caught her by the arm, drew her to him, put an arm about her waist, and looked up at her father.

"Babcock," he said, "I want this little girl. Will you give her to me?"

"Yes, if she so desires," replied the old bookkeeper.

"Little girl, will you be my wife—an old man's darling?"

Josie was in a tremor. She could not speak for a minute or so, for she was like one in a trance. Her two sisters gazed at her with anxiety plainly depicted in their faces.

"Yes," she finally said, and then the two sisters flew at her, embraced and kissed her, followed by their father.

"See here," said Alex, "this is the biggest deal I ever made. What's my commission?"

"Oh, we'll let you go with us to dinner," laughed the banker.

CHAPTER XX.

ALEX BUYS MORE STOCK.

Over at Delmonico's the brokers stared at Comak and the three pretty girls. They knew him, Babcock and Barton's boy well enough, but had never seen the girls before. Some thought they were Alex's sisters and cousins, but one said he did not have but one sister. They little dreamed of the romance of that little gathering.

During the meal Josie eyed Alex wistfully. She had been boasting to her sisters that she would capture him, and now fate had willed otherwise. Her brain was in a whirl. Had Alex whispered to her that he wanted her herself she would have backed out of her engagement to the old man.

None of them dreamed that he was already engaged.

The dinner was a pleasant affair. The old banker whispered to Josie that he would send her an engagement ring that evening, and when she got it she was to name the day she would become his wife, adding:

"And you must not keep me waiting more than a fortnight."

The dinner over, the party returned to Alex's office—except the old banker. Once more in the office the girls let their tongues run, and the clatter was a jolly one. Alex laughed over his exploit as a matchmaker, and offered his services to the other two sisters.

"Excuse me," said the eldest one. "The man I marry must do some courting. There isn't any fun in engagements without courtship."

"Oh, courtship can go on just the same after marriage," remarked Father Babcock. "Mr. Comak will be an ardent lover all the time, and that will add to the happiness of married life."

"If I am not happy I shall never forgive you," Josie said to Alex, "for this is all your doing."

"No, no! You did it yourself. You flirted outrageously with him, and he just surrendered on the spot."

The girls laughed and prepared to go home with their father.

Alex went in to see Tessie and tell her about it as soon as the three sisters were gone. The pretty typewriter was in a flutter of excitement over the incident.

"He had roped me into a blind pool just a few minutes before they came in," he said to her, "and I guess I got even with him," and he laughed and chuckled as he made the remark.

"Oh, you wicked boy!" she half whispered. "Do you call that a revenge?"

"I don't know yet. It's a blind pool, though, I guess."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; he's sixty-five and she only eighteen."

"What of that?"

"Don't ask me," and he laughed again. "She is cute enough to keep him blind as long as he lives. I say, Tessie, I'm in a blind pool to the tune of a quarter of a million. Keep an eye open for any pointers on cornering of stock. I am in the dark about it."

"Why did you go in so deep?"

"Just because I had faith in him. Guess I'll never do it again," and he shook his head.

She laughed, and remarked that she might have to stake him some day yet.

"Guess not," he replied. "I am going to salt down a half million where it will be safe."

"Whew! Have you got so much?"

"Guess I have."

At his own home that evening he told Irene of the match-making he had done down at the office. She laughed gleefully and said:

"You are good at that. You caused my engagement by your impudence, and I have forgiven you for it, too."

She was to marry in a week from that evening, and he and Tessie were to stand up with her.

A few days later he discovered that a certain stock was slowly rising in the market. He tried to find out who was buying, but failed.

"Guess that's the blind pool," he said. "At any rate, I am going to own some of it."

So he went to Blaisdell, who always bought for him, and said:

"I want 10,000 shares of O. & H. stock. Can you get them for me?"

"Guess I can. There's quite a demand for it just now."

They were bought that day, and they cost \$72 a share. Such a sale sent the stock up to 74 in an hour or two.

The man who was buying for the blind pool was not known to anyone but Comak himself. The stock climbed up slowly for a week till it reached 80. Then the brokers became aware of the silent force at work behind it. The quietness was then broken. A mad scramble for the stock began, and, as but few shares could be had, it went up with great bounds.

He met Comak on the street and said:

"O. & H. is going up like a rocket. Is that the blind pool?"

"Well, you don't expect me to give you any pointers, do you?"

"Oh, no. I want to ask you, though, if I'd be doing anything against my own interest by buying O. & H.?"

"Of course not. Buy all you want to," and the old man chuckled as he gave the advice. "Guess you can't find many shares on the market just now."

"Well, I'll see, anyhow. What's the matter with that stock, anyway?"

"There's a great demand for it."

"Yes, but what caused it?"

"Don't know," and the banker gave a shrug of the shoulder that said plainly he knew more than he cared to tell.

The scramble in the Stock Exchange was exciting in the extreme. The stock went up—up till 93 was reached. Then it began to look panicky. Alex told Blaisdell to sell him out. When the 10,000 shares were dumped on the pool a panic followed. A scene of wild confusion ensued such as Alex had never witnessed before, and the market broke entirely.

In ten minutes the stock was floundering down in the seventies again. Scores of brokers were squeezed—some so badly they had to leave the Exchange.

The pool was badly hurt. They could not rally the stock again, though they had plenty of cash on hand. They had to pay 93 for 10,000 shares, a loss of nearly \$200,000.

When it came time for a settlement, Comak had to admit

that the blind pool was a failure—that a slight loss had resulted from the investment.

"What was the investment?" Broker Truman asked at the meeting of the members of the pool.

"O. & H.," was the reply.

Alex gave a long whistle.

"What's the matter?" Comak asked.

"Nothing—nothing at all," was the reply.

"Did you dump that 10,000 shares on us?" Comak asked.

"I did."

Every man sprang up and glared at him.

"You played us false!" hissed a broker.

"How did I?" Alex demanded very promptly. "It was a blind pool. I knew nothing about it."

"How came you to buy the stock?"

"I saw it going up and bought heavily—just as any wise man would have done. Did you know what the pool was doing?"

"No," said the broker.

"Neither did I. It is now in order for you to take back the charge that I played false."

"Yes, I think so, too," said Comak. "He knew nothing about it. I guess he is the only one who made any money out of the deal."

"I pledge you my word that I shall never again invest a dollar in a blind pool," Alex sung out as the meeting broke up.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WIDOW BRADY AGAIN.

It soon leaked out that Barton's boy had busted up a blind pool in which he was a member himself.

The entire street guffawed over it, and Banker Comak was guyed unmercifully. He laughed over it himself, saying:

"You can never tell what that boy will do next. That was something any other man might have done just as innocently as he did. He scooped a big pile out of it, and we lost very little. I think the laugh is worth the money."

"It certainly was worth it to him," remarked Truman, who did not feel very happy over it. "I am like him. I won't go into any more blind pools."

Alex was now looked upon as one of the factors that could not be ignored in Wall street.

He met with uniform good luck, and all the brokers were his friends—except Glenn.

Meyers and Irene were married at the set time, and went off on a tour to last three weeks. A week later Comak startled the street by marrying the youngest daughter of Babcock, Barton's old bookkeeper. All society was astonished, for he was a millionaire, very old and weighed 270 pounds. She was but eighteen years old, petite and beautiful. Alex and her eldest sister stood up with them.

The next day after the wedding Alex was amazed at seeing Mrs. Brady enter his office. He sprang to his feet white as a sheet, and wondered what he should do if she began hostilities, as he did not happen to have any more of his wonderful perfumery.

"Good morning," she said, taking a seat and fanning herself.

He bowed low and old Babcock gazed at him over his glasses.

"What can I do for you, Mrs. Brady?" he asked.

"That's what I have come to see about," she replied. "I hear that you have set up for yourself, and beaten all the old gray-headed villains in the street. You got the best of me two or three times and made the whole city laugh at me. It was awful hard to bear, but I don't blame you, for boys are boys. I have lost money through two brokers, and now ten

thousand dollars is all I have left in the world except the house I live in. I want you to use it for me and——"

Alex shook his head.

"Sure now, I'll be good and give you no trouble at all," she pleaded. "Would I trouble you when I know you could kill me dead by drawing a cork? Oh, I'll do just as you tell me. Only use my money for me as you use your own and I'll be satisfied."

"But I am not doing that for anybody, ma'am," he protested. "I am simply doing business for myself. Should I take your money you would think I had stolen it, and would bother me as you did the others."

"No, no! I'll sign anything you want me to, and follow every instruction you give me. Ah, there's Tim, my neevy. He works for the typewriters."

"Hello, Aunt Brady!" greeted Tim, the new messenger, coming in at that moment.

"Is she your aunt, Tim?" Alex asked in no little surprise.

"Sure," replied Tim, "and I'm afther waiting for her to die in the hope of getting some of her money."

"Oh, the blackguard!" gasped the aunt, laughing. "Sure, and he's the only one as will tell the truth. I'll leave him enough to set him up in business if he stays honest."

"She wants me to use her money for her, Tim," Alex said. "But I am afraid she'll make trouble for me."

"She is more afraid of the likes of you than of ould Satan an' all his angels," Tim replied. "She'll give you no trouble at all, at all."

"Then I'll see what I can do for you, Mrs. Brady. But you must sign receipts and obey all orders."

"I'll do as you say."

"Well, leave the money and I'll receipt for it. Then you must not come here till I send for you. If you do I'll give up and quit. Do you agree to that?"

"Yes."

"Very well," and in a few minutes the business was done and she left her check for the money.

In a day or two it leaked out that Mrs. Brady was a client of his. Then the brokers laughed and joked about it. Some of them came in to see him about it. He laughed with them, and said she would give him no trouble whatever.

"Why, she'll clean out your office inside of a week," said Truman.

"Maybe she will, but she will run out into the street and gasp for breath if she does," he replied. "I've got some of Glenn's cologne yet."

The entire street waited to hear of the commencement of hostilities. But days and weeks passed, and she never appeared at all. Some of the brokers wondered at it, and one asked him what had become of her.

"She's up at her home, I guess," he replied, "and won't come down till I send for her."

"The deuce! How is that?"

"Oh, I told her I wouldn't love her any more if she bothered me, and that settles a woman every time."

That set the street to giggling. They talked and laughed and waited. Other weeks passed, and stocks went up and down as speculation ebbed and flowed.

One day she came down, and the brokers in the building heard of it. They were on the lookout for a row.

But she was happy, and smiled when she came out. Alex had doubled her money, and she had come away with a thousand dollars for her own use, leaving the balance with him.

The day after she was there Nellie Babcock, the second daughter of the old bookkeeper, came in and said:

"Mr. Alston, father has given me \$5,000. As I never expect to win a husband, I must live on that all my life—unless you can take it and make more money for me. He says you

have better luck than anyone else in Wall street. Won't you please invest it for me?"

She was pretty, but a great flirt. Alex saw through it. It was the old man's money, and she was using it as an excuse to come to the office and talk with him.

He smiled and said he would do the best he could for her, but that she should not say she did not expect ever to marry.

"I may play the same trick on you I played on Josie," he remarked.

"Well, I hope you won't get me an old man, then, for I just won't have him."

"Not if he is rich?"

"No—even though he owned all the money in Wall street," she replied.

"Good! I like that. I'll look out for a good-looking young man for you."

"You just let that alone and look after the money. Make me rich and young men will hunt me up. I am not out after a husband," and she laughed merrily as she made the remark.

He took the money and put it into the safe, saying he would do his best to make something for her. When she was gone the old bookkeeper came to him and said:

"Nellie begged me so hard for that money I had to give it to her. I hope she won't give you any trouble about it. She has such unbounded faith in your good luck she would not hesitate to place all she has in the world in your hands."

"Well, I hope I will have good luck with her money."

"So do I. She could not be made to believe otherwise."

"That's the trouble. Women are all so sanguine they never see the risks they run. I heard Mr. Barton say so one day. They expect to win every time, and when they lose they never forgive the poor broker."

"You are right. It's a pity they ever come to Wall street. I don't see how you had the nerve to take Mrs. Brady's check. She'll be sure to make trouble for you."

"I don't think she will give me any trouble at all. I have proven it to her satisfaction that I can lick her without a fight, and so she won't try to make any trouble for me."

The old man laughed and said he didn't know but what he was right. Yet he was the only one in the street who could manage her.

Nellie came over once a week and talked with him. Sometimes her mother came with her. They both were so very attentive to him he really thought of telling them of his engagement to Tessie.

By and by he saw a chance to put her money up on a margin for her. To his amazement the stock dropped, and the last dollar of it was wiped out. He didn't let the old bookkeeper know it, but covered it with his own money.

"Glad I didn't go in deep," he said to himself, as he made the loss good. "But I'll never take another woman on my books. Were she a man, I'd show him the deal and let him bear the loss."

When another chance came he had better luck. Her \$5,000 was turned over three times, and made her \$15,000. That very day she came in with her mother, and was told the news.

"I knew you could do it," she said. "I never once had any doubt about it. I was dreaming about you all night long, and just knew that something was going to come of it."

"What did you dream?" he asked.

"Oh, I—I couldn't tell you that," and she hid her face behind her fan.

Just then a telegraph messenger boy came in with a dispatch for Mr. Babcock. The old bookkeeper was surprised as he took it. When he read it, he gasped out:

"Oh, my God!"

"What is it, father?" cried Nellie, springing up and running to him.

"Mr. Comak is dead!"

CHAPTER XXII.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

The telegram was from Josie to her father. Mr. Comak had been taken suddenly ill that morning, and his family physician was sent for. It was heart trouble, and in a couple of hours the rich old banker was dead.

She was a widow seven months after marriage.

Nellie uttered a little scream when her father told her the news, and Alex ran to her to conduct her to a seat.

"What is it?" he asked of Babcock, after seating Nellie.

"Mr. Comak is dead!"

"The deuce! He dropped off very sudden."

"Yes. We had not heard that he was ailing."

"Oh, I must go to Josie!" cried Nellie, wringing her hands. "Poor Josie! It's an awful blow to her!"

"Mr. Babcock, you must take Miss Nellie up there," Alex said, "and if I can be of any service let me know. You can take all the time you wish, and I'll keep a memoranda of all that is to go on the books."

"Thank you, sir," and the old man at once put on his hat and coat. Alex sent Tim out for a carriage for them.

"It's perfectly awful, coming so sudden," remarked Nellie, as she rose to go.

"Yes, indeed. Tell Josie she has my deepest sympathy."

He escorted her down to the carriage. Tessie saw them as they passed her door, and was waiting for him when he came back.

"Have you heard the news?" he asked her.

"No; what is it?"

"Banker Comak is dead."

"Oh, my! When did he die?"

"Just a few minutes ago. His widow telegraphed to her father. Her sister was in and nearly fainted when she heard it."

"It was sudden. She is a rich widow now, Josie."

"Yes. He had children, but he seemed to worship her."

The news ran through the street like wildfire on the plains. Quite a little flutter in the Stock Exchange followed the announcement, for the banker held heavy investments in stocks.

The flurry was soon over, and the business went on as before.

Alex attended the funeral on account of the young widow's father, and then returned to the business of his office.

The deceased banker's will was opened and read in the office of his lawyers the day after the funeral. His estate was valued at four millions. The young widow got the town house, horses, carriages, furniture and a half million dollars in bonds, paying five per cent. The balance went to his children by a former wife.

"That was a big haul for the little girl," said Alex to Tessie, when he heard of it.

"Yes, indeed. I wonder if she grieves for him?"

"I don't know. He was very kind to her, and she seemed to devote all her time to him."

The old bookkeeper was in a deep study for some time after the death of the banker. Alex noticed it, and one day asked him what the trouble was.

"No trouble at all," he replied. "I was just wondering at the good luck of Josie. She says it is your luck—your work—and that she is going to come over some day and thank you for it."

Alex laughed and would have said something had not Broker Dubois come in at the moment.

"Let me see you a moment or two, Alston," Dubois said, leading the way into the little office. Alex went in with him.

"I am in a deal that calls for more money than I have at command," the broker said to him in a half whisper. "I didn't dream I'd have to put in so much. I want \$100,000 to save \$200,000 already in. Can you let me have it? I have nothing to put up but the money in the deal."

"Then I'll have to let you have it without security.

"Yes, save my honor."

"That will do. I never did such a thing before, but I believe in you," and he gave his check for \$100,000.

Dubois thanked him and hastened away with it.

The next day his failure was announced in the Stock Exchange, with heavy liabilities. Alex was in for it.

"They say you let him have a check for \$100,000 only yesterday," Broker Truman said to him. "Is it true?"

"Yes."

"Are you secured?"

"No."

"What! No security?"

"Not a penny. I let him have it as a friendly act."

"Well, you can find plenty of that sort in Wall street."

"No doubt of that. Mr. Dubois is honest and some day I'll get it back with interest."

"But they are all saying there is something crooked about his failure."

"Well, it will take some pretty plain proof of it to make me believe it. If Mr. Dubois wants assistance he can have it of me."

Truman repeated that and it saved the unfortunate broker a good deal of hard abuse. A dozen or more brokers came to him and said:

"We hear that you have said that you believed in Dubois' honesty and squareness, though your loss is greater than any one else. Is it true?"

"It is true. I am out \$100,000 by his failure. I am willing to stake him with another \$100,000 if he wants it. I never desert a friend in need."

That astounded the street.

Babcock shook his head when he heard it from a friend, saying:

"He is the only one in Wall street who would do such a thing. But he is able to do it, and that makes a big difference. I would rather have him for a friend than the President of the United States."

When Dubois heard it he went to Alex and said:

"They tell me you have not lost confidence in me. I want to say that your confidence was not misplaced. I made a fatal mistake, that's all."

"I did so myself not long ago," Alex replied. "When you saw a chance come to me and let me know what it is. I never go back on a friend. How about your office?"

"I have a two years' lease on it yet, but don't know that I can keep it. The rent is high."

"Keep it and stick to your work. I'll back you."

Tears dimmed the broker's eyes as he grasped Alex's hand. Neither said more, and so they parted.

In a few days his affairs were settled. He was left nearly \$200,000 in debt. Many brokers said harsh things about him. But that is the case when a man goes under in any business.

The landlord called on him to know about the rent of the offices.

"I'll keep them," he replied.

"Very well."

He paid the rent and kept on. He had to dispense with two of his clerks. But one day he got a tip and came to Alex with it. Alex put up \$200,000 and it went into margins. In two weeks he had made \$100,000, one-half of which went to Alex.

The street was astounded. Some of those who had abused him most called to congratulate him.

He smiled and said:

"I don't wish your congratulations. You hit me when I was down. I can never forget that."

Truman was one who had said some hard things about him, for he had lost \$20,000 by him.

Dubois sent a check for the amount to him. He acknowledged the receipt of it and congratulated him.

He sent the acknowledgment back by the messenger, with the request that he send a receipt without any congratulations.

Truman was worried, but did as he requested.

"Dubois feels very sore over the way he was treated after his failure," Alex said to him. "I am the only man in the street who believed in him at the time."

CHAPTER XXIII.

CONCLUSION.

Time wore on and the deals in stocks went on continuously in Wall street. Alex kept very quiet all the time, but keeping an eye open for a chance to make a deal. Tessie and her typewriters kept busy, but no news of value passed through their hands.

By an accident Alex picked up a tip one day, and invested heavily in it. He used the Widow Brady's money and all that Nellie Babcock had placed with him. It turned out splendidly and he sent a note to the widow to call at the office.

She came down dressed in her best and was as quiet and demure as a young schoolgirl. The other brokers in the building heard she was there and came in to hear the row. She knew them all and smiled as she greeted them.

"I am glad you came in," she said. "I put \$10,000 in the boy's hands, and now it's \$60,000. He is the only honest broker in Wall street. He would not rob a woman."

That scattered them. They left in haste, saying they would call again. She laughed, and when Alex showed her the record of his use of her money, she read it over carefully, paid his commission and wanted to leave it all with him.

"No—just leave \$10,000," he said. "Take the rest of it and buy real estate. That will be safe. If the \$10,000 should be lost you would have the property. Never risk all your money in anything."

"I'll do just what you tell me to," she replied. "If you tell me to buy a car-load of monkeys I'd do it."

"Well, I won't tell you to do that. Just look about for good property to put your money in, and be sure you don't pay more than it is worth."

"You give me more good advice than any man I ever met," she laughed, "and I am going to follow it to the very letter," and she left, smiling like a young girl, to the very great astonishment of the brokers in the building. They rushed in to see him as soon as she was gone.

"How do you manage her?" one asked.

"Easy enough," he replied.

"But how? We have all failed with her."

"Do you expect me to give you my secret? Not much. If you only knew you'd all plot to steal her away from me. I want to keep the old girl myself."

They roared with laughter, and Alex joined in with them. They said he was a marvel for luck, and one hinted that he had probably been making love to her.

"She'll kill you yet," said one.

"Bah!" and he laughed.

"The first time she loses your time will come," said Truman.

"I have Glenn's cologne. I can defy the world. I am master of all I survey," and his confident air and heroic declamation produced an explosion that was heard all over the building.

One day Josie Comak, the rich young widow, drove up in

front of the office in a coach with liveried driver and footman and tripped upstairs to his office. She was more beautiful than ever. Her father met her at the door and kissed her. Alex arose and welcomed her cordially.

"You have been the cause of all my good fortune," she said to him as she extended her gloved hand. "And I have come to you for more of the same sort."

"What! Do you want me to get you another husband? You never paid me my commission for the first one yet."

"Oh, you horrid boy! I don't mean that at all," and she dropped into his office chair, and took complete possession of the entire office.

"Well, then, tell me how I can help you, and if I can do so I will."

"I want you to take some of my bonds, sell them and use the money for me till I have a million dollars. I want just one million to put in bonds, and then I'll never risk another dollar in anything."

She looked at him and smiled in her innocent way. He thought her very beautiful. Said he:

"I can tell you a better way than that—and a safer one."

"How?" and she looked up at him with a trusting innocence of expression in her face.

"Marry a man with ten millions."

"Oh, my! Who is the man?"

"I have no one in mind just now, but there are plenty of them who would gladly lay their fortunes at your feet. You are beautiful—very beautiful, and growing more beautiful every day."

"Oh, what an awful flatterer!" she laughed. "But I don't want to marry another old man. I'd rather you'd make a half million for me and then I'd set my cap for a young man—a very young man—not a day older than myself."

Tessie Craig heard she was in there and could not keep out. They were acquainted. Had dined together before Josie married the old banker. But now, though she met her face to face, Josie did not recognize the typewriter. Tessie wore a smile on her face and went out after getting something she had come for. Alex smiled also, for he saw that her good fortune had turned Josie's head.

The fair young widow went away, Alex escorting her down to her carriage, leaving an order for \$100,000 worth of bonds behind her. A number of brokers dropped in to find out who she was. They were surprised on learning that she was Banker Comak's widow.

Alex sold the bonds and deposited the money in bank, to keep in readiness for instant use when needed. Days, weeks and months passed and no good chance occurred for the use of it. She drove down to Wall street about once a week and spent an hour in the office. Her father being there, disarmed comment. One, and sometimes two of her sisters came with her, and their presence generally created a little sensation in the building.

At last Alex got a chance to use her money. He got a tip of a big corner, and when the stock began to go up he had a million up in margins. When it was over, Josie Comak had made \$150,000, Nellie Babcock, \$55,000, Tessie Craig, \$70,000 and Mrs. Brady, \$35,000, besides \$300,000 for himself.

The last deal added so much to his prestige as a successful speculator in stocks that hundreds of men and women sought him, and pleaded with him to buy and sell for them. Alex did not want to do that sort of business, and so told them.

One day Tim, the messenger boy in the office, said to him:

"I know a chance to make some money in a house and lot up in Harlem."

"Let's hear what it is," Alex replied.

His mother had heard the wife of a contractor say her husband would pay \$27,000 for a lot with an old brick house on

it, four doors west of where she was living. He knew that the owner wanted to sell, so he went to him to ask him his price. The man wanted \$23,000 for it.

"A difference of \$4,000," said Alex. "I'll see about it, and if there is any money in it I'll divide with you."

After a week he bought it for \$22,000 cash. The contractor offered \$25,000. Alex demanded \$30,000, but finally got \$26,000.

He gave Tim \$2,000, and the boy was almost beside himself with joy. He had now been nearly two years with Alex, and was nineteen years old. He was engaged to Sadie McGuire, one of the typewriters, who was two years older than he. Tessie had found it out, and told Alex about it, saying:

"They are both saving every penny for the future. She fell in love with him the day he threw the peddler down the stairs."

"How many more are engaged?"

"Four of them—and all to clerks in the office."

He laughed and said it was funny; so did she.

"Well, I am tired of waiting for you," he remarked. "We are both old enough to marry. Let's set a day next month and hitch?"

She agreed, and both kept the secret. They simply went to a minister and were married. The announcement was made the next day, and quite a sensation followed. Alex sent a note to Babcock to run the office himself for a week. He and Tessie spent that time traveling in the South.

When he returned he received no end of congratulations. But the Babcock girls never called at the office again. The fair young widow transferred her business to another broker.

One day Alex said to Tim:

"You are engaged to Sadie. Let me know when you are ready to marry and I'll set you up."

Tim laughed and whispered back to him:

"The divil a bit could we wait. We've been married four months already."

Alex laughed heartily and shook hands with him. He doubled his salary and put Sadie in charge of the typewriting department. Business went on as usual, and Alex grew to be one of the most popular brokers in Wall street. But with all his shrewdness he sometimes got squeezed. That came to nearly all the brokers in their career. He generally won, though, because he was patient enough to wait for chances instead of trying to boom stocks and forcing chances. Many old brokers declared him to be either the brightest or else the luckiest dealer they ever knew. He kept his own counsel and did his own thinking, and on that plan he made an immense fortune. To-day he has a happy home uptown, with four children to romp with of evenings. Tessie is the happiest of mothers; and Mrs. Alston is still a widow, preferring to live with her children and grandchildren. Yet with all his wealth and social position he is still spoken of by old Wall street men as "That Boy of Barton's."

THE END.

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